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EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT.

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Everlasting Punishment

LECTURES

DELIVERED AT ST. JAMES'S CHURCH, PICCADILLY, ON THE SIX FIRST SUNDAYS AFTER TRINITY, IN THE YEAR 1880.

BY

EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN, D.D.
DEAN OF NORWICH.

"Ye have . . . strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life."—EZEK. xiii. 22.

Τέλος δὲ τῆς ἀτελευτήτου κολάσεως ἐψηφίζοντο, ἄλλη τοῦτο παράκλησις πρὸς ἁμαρτίαν πᾶσαν καὶ ἀπώλειαν. "And they" [Origen and other heretics] "determined that there would be an end to the punishment which endeth not, this being another incitement to every kind of sin and ruin."—(*From the account given by Photius of the Acts of the Fifth General Council, held under Justinian, 553.*)

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PREFACE.

In making my very humble contribution to a great controversy (which I have done, not from any sort of attraction to the subject, but simply in the interests of what I conceive to be divine truth, and truth which, whether *de fide* or not, has certainly a very momentous practical bearing), I wish to define the exact position which I attempt, as best I can, to defend in these Sermons. It is simply that there is nothing in God's attributes or purpose (so far as it is given us to know them), which is irreconcileable with the everlasting punishment of the wicked and ungodly, and that the true relief from difficulties on the subject is to be found, not in calling in question either the eternity of the punishment, or the immortality of the subjects of it, but in other notices

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of Holy Scripture respecting its different degrees, its exact pursuance of a moral law, and so forth. With no collateral topic have I sought to deal, except in the way of occasionally glancing at it. Thus, I have not entered into the question whether, after death, those who have died in the faith of Christ and fear of God may not be the subjects of moral progress and enlightenment. To me it appears almost certain that they will and must, and it is here that I seem to see an escape from the difficulty which arises, when we think of that vast number of persons who, while we cannot deny to them genuine religious principle, yet manifest faults of temper and conduct, which seem to make them unmeet for Heaven. *They are not taken to Heaven at once, but to Paradise,* where we may well conceive that, in a far closer communion with the Saviour and His saints than it was possible for them to enjoy here below, "delivered from the burden of the flesh," and from the manifold temptations which are involved in a sojourn in the flesh, the spirit is gradually purified, trained, disciplined,

illuminated, and so made far meeter than it was, at the moment of its exit from the body, for that "inheritance of the saints in light," which the solemn sentence of the last day, "Come, ye blessed," is eventually to call it into. I entirely share the feeling, which is now so commonly avowed, that Protestants have not given that prominence to the doctrine of the intermediate, as distinct from the ultimate, state, which Scripture so clearly asserts, and the assertion of which is quite necessary to exhibit in full symmetry and significance the orthodox Catholic doctrine of the Last Things. At the same time, I entirely fail to see how, compatibly with the ideas called up in the mind by the word "Paradise," purgatorial suffering can be supposed to be an ingredient in the illumination and sanctification, which are characteristic of the intermediate state of the righteous; and if I am asked my interpretation of "the fire" which "shall try every man's work, of what sort it is," and of the being "saved so as by fire,"[1] I can only answer that

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 13, 15.

I suppose the fire to be the searching judgment of God, which, at the last great day, will be applied to each man's character, and make manifest whether it had in it, or not, the faith in God, which is a principle of permanence, and which connects the soul with God and the unseen world, or whether the things, which are seen and are temporal, exhausted its interests and ambitions ; whether, in short, it was "gold, silver, precious stone," on the one hand, or "wood, hay, stubble," on the other.[1] But, while the idea of moral progress in the intermediate state, *for*

[1] See 1 Cor. iii. 12, 15.—After careful consideration of this difficult passage, I have come to the conclusion of Dean Alford upon it, that "what is said does not refer, except by accommodation, *to the religious life of believers in general ;* but to the DUTY AND REWARD OF TEACHERS." Only, I would propose to add to this, that the "gold, silver, hay, stubble," etc., are, *in the first instance*, not so much "the matter of the ministers' teaching," as real and nominal Christians themselves. St. Paul had "laid the foundation" at Corinth, by preaching Christ there before any other had done so. Succeeding teachers built on to the foundation which he had laid. And what he seems to say to them is ; "Do not glory in the *number* of the adherents you have won to Christ. What is their *quality?* Are they of true sterling worth? Will they stand the searching judgment of God (which is as fire) at the last day? Will that fire show them to be solid or perishable material?"

those who have gone out of life penitent and believing, entirely approves itself to me, I am unable to see in Holy Scripture any traces of such a thing as *a second probation beyond the grave for those who have passed away without penitence and faith,* while they have enjoyed life-long opportunities for the exercise of those graces. The difficult passage in St. Peter's first Epistle, respecting the preaching of Christ to the spirits in prison,[1] is often appealed to as holding out, at all events, a prospect and a possibility of renewed offers of grace and mercy to those who have been in this life disobedient. But when it is considered that great divines like Bishop Pearson [2]

[1] 1 Pet. iii. 18-20.

[2] Pearson even alleges this text (1 Peter iii. 18, 19, 20), as one proof of Christ's pre-existence before His birth of the Virgin. "Christ was really before the flood, for he preached to them that lived before it; and at the creation of the world, for he created it. That he preached to those before the flood is evident by the words of St. Peter, who saith, that *Christ was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.* From which words it appeareth that Christ preached by the same spirit by the virtue of which he

and Archbishop Leighton[1] have accepted an interpretation of that passage which altogether removes

was raised from the dead: but that spirit was not his soul, but something of a greater power. Secondly, that those to whom he preached were such as were 'disobedient.' Thirdly, that the time when they were disobedient was the time before the flood, *while the ark was a preparing.* It is certain, then, that Christ did preach unto the persons, which in the days of Noah were disobedient, all that time the long-suffering of God waited, and consequently, so long as repentance was offered. And it is as certain that he never preached to them after they died; which I shall not need here to prove, because those against whom I bring this argument deny it not. It followeth therefore that he preached to them while they lived, and were disobedient, for in the refusing of that mercy which was offered to them by the preaching of Christ, did their disobedience principally consist." — "Pearson on the Creed," vol. i. pp. 205, 206 [Oxford, MDCCCXXXIII.] Art. II. He says also, under Art. V., p. 385, that "the difficulties" (of supposing that the "spirit," by which Christ went and preached to the "spirits in prison," was the human soul of Christ) "are so many, that they staggered St. Augustine, and caused him at last to think that these words of St. Peter belonged not unto the doctrine of Christ's descending into hell." As far as the passage referred to goes, we can hardly say that Augustine does more than throw out for the consideration of Euodius, after reviewing the difficulties of the other interpretation, whether the passage may not after all have nothing to do with the spirits of the dead, but refer entirely to what went on in Noah's time, the preaching to the antediluvians by the Spirit of Christ in the patriarch. [Aug. Epist. clxiv., *Ad Euodium.*]

[1] "*Sometime disobedient.* If you look to their visible subordin-

from it any reference to the proceedings of Christ in Hades; and that it was probably from doubts as to its true meaning—doubts which were entertained by St. Augustine—that the reference to it was struck out of the third Article by Convocation in 1559,[1] it

ate preacher, you find he was an holy man, and an able and diligent preacher of righteousness, both in his doctrine and in the track of his life, which is the most powerful preaching; on both which accounts it seems strange he prevailed so little. But it appears much more so, if we look higher, even to the height at which the Apostle points, that almighty 'Spirit of Christ' who preached to them. And yet, they were disobedient!"—"Leighton's Commentary on St. Peter," *in loc.* vol. ii. pp. 223-4. [Edition of Religious Tract Society.]

[1] The Third Article, in the first draught of it made under Cranmer, in the time of Edward VI. (A.D. 1552), was as follows:—

"As Christ died and was buried for us: so also it is to be believed that he went down into Hell. For the body lay in the sepulchre until the resurrection: but his ghost departing from him, was with the ghosts that were in prison, or in Hell; as the place of S. Peter doth testify."

Bishop Harold Browne tells us in the Introduction to his "Exposition of XXXIX. Articles," p. 9 (Longmans, 1874),

"One of Abp. Parker's earliest labours was directed towards a recasting of the 'Articles of Religion.' He expunged four of the original Articles" (they were forty-two, as Cranmer had drafted them), "and added four. . . . . The convocation, as appears from an original document in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, made several further alterations, besides those which

will surely be thought very hazardous to ground upon a passage, on which there has been so much difference of opinion among the learned, the hope of a second probation when this life is at an end,—a hope of such vital moment to the human race, that we ought to have the very clearest warranty of the Word

the archbishop had made. Especially, *they erased the latter part of the original Third Article, concerning the preaching to the spirits in prison.*"

It is a curious fact that they erased also the Article which condemned "Restorationism" (or the doctrine of Universal Salvation), and which was the forty-second in Cranmer's draft of the Articles. It shows, at all events, what views he and Ridley took of this doctrine. It ran thus:—

"*All men shall not be saved at the length.*

"They also are worthy of condemnation, who endeavour at this time to restore the dangerous opinion, that all men, be they never so ungodly, shall at length be saved, when they have suffered pains for their sins a certain time appointed by God's justice."

Dr. Macbride in his "Lectures on the Articles," pp. 129, 130 [Oxford, 1853], tells us:—

"Abp. Parker was probably induced to omit the concluding clause" (of the Third Article), "which fixed the meaning of the text in St. Peter, by a paper prepared for the Synod of 1562, by the Bishop of Exeter" (William Alley), "in which he says that there have been great invectives in his diocese between preachers on this Article, some holding that the going down of Christ to hell was nothing else but that the virtue and strength of his death

of God for entertaining it. But even putting this aside, and accepting (as I myself do) the simpler and more natural view of the passage, adopted by Bishop Horsley, who regards it as an inspired notice of the proceedings of our Lord's human soul in the interval between His death and His resurrection,[1] I cannot

should be made known to them that were dead before; others maintaining that it only means, he sustained upon the cross the infernal pains of hell, when he cried out, *Why hast thou forsaken me?* Finally, there are persons who preach that this Article is not contained in other symbols: and all these sayings they ground upon Erasmus, and the Germans, especially Calvin and Bullinger; the contrary side bringing forward in their support the universal consent of the Fathers of both Churches."—Dr. Macbride's references are to Strype's "Annals," i. c. 31, and "Life of Parker," i. 513. He adds in a note, that "In 1567 Lord Burleigh thanks the Archbishop for his care in appeasing the unprofitable controversy then newly raised upon the descent of Christ into hell."

It would appear, however, from Bishop Browne's words, quoted above, that not Parker, but the Convocation of the day, were responsible for the excision of the last clause of Article III.

[1] Bishop Horsley, however, gives very little support or comfort to those who find any warrant in the passage for a possible extension of probation on the other side of the grave. He says:—

"The souls in custody, to whom our Saviour went in his disembodied soul, and preached, were those 'which sometime were disobedient.' . . . But what did he preach to departed souls, and what could be the end of his preaching? Certainly *he preached*

but think that there is a very long and perilous stride from the assertion that the souls of the once disobedient (but, as Horsley thinks, penitent) antediluvians received a visit from the Redeemer, in which He heralded to them the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, to the inference that all who die in disobedience, even after the Gospel has been clearly promulgated to them, may be expected to have the offers of grace made to them again in that invisible realm, which lies on the yonder side

neither repentance nor faith; for the preaching of either comes too late to the departed soul. These souls had believed and repented, or they had not been in that part of the nether regions, which the soul of the Redeemer visited. Nor was the end of his preaching any liberation of them from we know not what purgatorial pains, of which the Scriptures give not the slightest intimation. But if he went to proclaim to them (and to proclaim or publish is the true sense of the word, to preach) the glad tidings that he had actually offered the sacrifice of their redemption, and was about to appear before the Father as their intercessor, in the merit of his own blood, this was a preaching fit to be addressed to departed souls, and would give new animation and assurance to their hope of the consummation, in due season, of their bliss; and this, it may be presumed, was the end of his preaching. But the great difficulty, in the description of the souls to whom this preaching for this purpose was addressed, is this; that they were souls of some of the antediluvian

of the grave, and to enjoy a second opportunity of turning and saving their souls alive. *Auctoris aliud agentis parva auctoritas;* and the obvious general scope of the passage in question is, to notice the fact of Christ's activity, when He was in the realm of the dead, and of His having announced among the spirits of the dead the glad tidings of His great salvation. But His visit to that realm is past and over; the descent into Hades is an accomplished fact; and though we believe that the spirits of the faithful are "with Him" in Paradise, by a much more intimate spiritual

races; not that it at all startles me to find antediluvian souls in safe-keeping for final salvation. On the contrary, I should find it very difficult to believe (unless I were to read it somewhere in the Bible), that of the millions that perished in the general deluge, all died hardened in impenitence and unbelief; insomuch that not one of that race could be an object of future mercy, beside the eight persons who were miraculously saved in the ark for the purpose of re-peopling the depopulated earth. Nothing in the general plan of God's dealings with mankind, as revealed in Scripture, makes it necessary to suppose that, of the antediluvian race, who might repent upon Noah's preaching, more would be saved from the temporal judgment, than the purpose of a gradual repopulation of the world demanded; or to suppose, on the other hand, that all who perished in the flood are to perish everlastingly in the lake of fire."—Bishop Horseley's Sermon on "The Descent of Christ into Hell."

communion than can be realised here below, evidence that He will again visit Hades on a mission to the spirits of the dead seems altogether wanting. The hope of a second offer of grace to the impenitent, when this life is over, which rests upon such a foundation, must be frail indeed. The text is just glanced at towards the conclusion of the Fifth Sermon.

There is another topic, sometimes urged by the assailants of the doctrine of Everlasting Punishment, which, as it is not adverted to in my notes upon the word *αἰώνιος*, may suitably find some notice here. It is urged that Eternity is not, according to the popular conception of it, Time prolonged indefinitely *a parte ante* and *a parte post*, but something specifically different, and that one of the most solemn and sublime passages of the Book of Revelation, in which we are told of a period when "there shall be time no longer,"[1] lends a support to this doctrine of a specific difference. It is inferred, therefore, that the word *αἰώνιος* does not mean "never-ending," but merely

[1] Rev. x. 6.

expresses that condition of existence which is to supervene upon the cessation of time. Now, on a subject of such transcendant importance as that before us, one must be very careful not to "darken counsel by words without knowledge."[1] Let us examine whether any, and what, plain meaning can be attached to such statements as that made above. I can perfectly understand how Time *subjectively* (*or to our conceptions*) may, in a higher condition of existence, "be no longer." It is often said that, by the very rapid means of communication, which railways and electric telegraphs afford, space is annihilated, not meaning, of course, that there are not still nearly four hundred miles intervening between London and Edinburgh, but that, as I can convey myself to Edinburgh in nine hours, and my thought thither in less than five minutes, the four hundred miles are to me, and for practical purposes, so reduced, that they may be said to be brought to nothing. Similarly, if one supposes a rational creature to be possessed of perfect

[1] See Job xxxviii. 2, and xlii. 3.

foresight, and his memory to be so strengthened that it should recall an incident of fifty years ago with all the vividness of impression which is made by what passes to-day, one can see that all mental perspective would be done away with, and that *to a being so endowed* Time would be annihilated, the past and future being as present to him as the present.[1] But, if you ask me to conceive of Time and Space as *really and objectively annihilated*, my answer is, that my mind is not so constructed that I *can* conceive of such a thing. Time and space are essential conditions of every action; that is, every action must take a certain amount of time in doing, and must be done in a certain corner of space. But what is the bearing

[1] The late Rev. Mr. Woodward of Fethard, a writer of great power and piety, in one of his published Essays (which, having mislaid the book, I cannot refer to), draws out very powerfully this probable distinction between the mind, as it is in time, and as it will be hereafter. I think he calls Time *successional existence*, and compares the experiences of this life to a pilgrimage, in which every day opens out to us some new scene. When we pass into eternity, it will be, he says, as if we ascended a hill, and thence surveyed at one *coup d'œuil* the whole road, with which we had acquainted ourselves by sections.

of speculations like this on the meaning of the word αἰώνιος? Are we to suppose that, when eternal life is promised to the righteous, and eternal punishment threatened to the wicked, what is meant is that both parties shall be then in a condition in which mental perspective will be destroyed, and the past and the future will be as present as the present? I can grasp this as an idea; I can understand it as a position. *But I cannot accept it as a just exegesis of the word* αἰώνιος *in St. Matt.* xxv. 46, *and in similar connexions.* It seems to me far too subtle and fine-drawn, far too difficult to be received by simple folks (for whom surely the Holy Scriptures were written), to be the true meaning. And even supposing (for argument's sake) that the word is to be so interpreted, Time is not annihilated really because it is annihilated to our conceptions. Is then the punishment of the wicked to be endless or not? The emphatic expressions in St. Mark ix. 44, 46, 48, "the worm that dieth not," "the fire that is not quenched," seem, most assuredly, even after the

most dexterous manipulation by those who wish to make them mean something else, to make answer in the affirmative.

But, as I have already said, while I hope it will not be thought that in these Sermons I have declined the Scriptural argument, I have designedly, and of set purpose, not put it in the front place, because I strongly feel that the real objections to the doctrine of Everlasting Punishment lie deeper than any Scriptural texts, and that, were only Scripture itself in question, no doctrine but the old-fashioned orthodox one would have ever found acceptance. Professor Jellett touches the heart of this question when, in a paper in the "Contemporary Review,"[1] he says that, where Holy Scripture and the moral sense of man seem to give different verdicts, one of three solutions is open to us. Either (1) the moral sense is wrong; or (2) Holy Scripture is wrong; or (3) our interpretation of Holy Scripture is wrong. Number (2) being out of the question by the admission of both

[1] In Vol. xxxii. p. 155. April 1878.

parties, the choice between (1) and (3) is still left open. This is a masterly and luminous setting-out of the subject certainly; and one feels indebted to the Professor for it. But he goes on to say that the popular theology always elects the first in preference to the third alternative, and is wrong in doing so. Now, may I venture to observe that (while of course there are obscure passages of Scripture) some texts, and especially *on subjects which most concern us* (as surely everlasting punishment does) are so plain that no interpretation whatever is needed? They speak for themselves; "he may run that readeth it." Such are some of the passages usually alleged in support of Everlasting Punishment, as St. Matt. xxv. 41, 46; St. Mark ix. 43-49; Rev. xxi. 8, 27; to which I must add the often and pertinently quoted St. Mark xiv. 21 ("Good were it for that man if he had never been born"); for is not time, even when protracted to thousands of years, a mere point in comparison of Eternity; and how could it be said to be good for a man not to have been born if, after the lapse of

ages of suffering, he is to inherit glory and blessedness for ever?

In these passages then, where Scripture speaks plain language to plain people (and shall we suppose that God would speak otherwise than in the plainest way on topics of such vital concern?), if the moral sense should seem to be at variance with Scripture, which of the two is to carry the day? Did Abraham act in compliance with, or against his moral sense, when (in intention) he offered up Isaac at God's express bidding? While it must be admitted that to the imperfectly developed moral sense of men in those very early days, the required sacrifice would have been in all probability far less repulsive than to our own, still it must have constituted a stumbling-block of the most formidable kind to Abraham's faith. The love of God, and the veracity of God, must both have seemed to him to be seriously impeached. Could the God, whom Abraham was conscious of having served with fidelity and devotion, requite his service by demanding from him the perpetration with

his own hand of a deed of blood, which must needs wring his heart asunder? And what was to become of the promise, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called,"[1] if Isaac was to die, before he had children, by his father's hand? The Holy Spirit has been pleased to give us a glimpse into the mind of the patriarch on this occasion, and to show us his solution of the difficulties in which God's order had involved him. Abraham accounted "that God was able to raise" Isaac "up even from the dead."[2] God was loving; and could not therefore design to remove his son from him permanently. God was true; and His express promise must therefore be fulfilled without fail. And as all-powerful, He was able to devise a way by which His love and veracity might both be vindicated. God had only to say to Death, "Give him back; you must not hold him;" and Isaac would be given back, the father was well assured. O grand loyalty of faith, which, when a perfectly plain precept is issued, seeming to violate the conceptions of God

[1] Gen. xxi. 12, and Heb. xi. 18. [2] Heb. xi. 19.

gained from the moral sense, does not go about to prove that the precept means less than it seems to mean, does not attempt to evade it by some such sorry shift as that "Offer him up" might mean merely, "Present him on the altar," not "Slay"—but is assured that God is well able to clear His own character, and that if the moral sense condemns His dealings, it is probably only because the whole of those dealings is not at present laid open to view. Is not the trial of Abraham's faith by the precept enjoined upon him marvellously like the trial of ours by means of those Scriptures, which seem to plain minds to assert plainly the everlasting punishment of the wicked? These passages are apparently (we say) in conflict with God's attribute of love. And they are no less at variance (we think) with other Scriptural passages (such as that respecting "the restitution of all things" [1]), which look, we imagine, in another direction. Is Professor Jellett right in thinking that the

[1] Acts iii. 21. See this passage, and others in which a similar significance has been found, commented upon in the note at the end of Sermon IV.

solution is to be sought in examining the very explicit passages on which the doctrine rests, and considering whether they may not be twisted to another meaning? Were it not better to take God as meaning just what He seems to plain people to say, and nothing else, leaving Him to clear up His character to our feeble apprehensions, and assured that, when we stand on a higher platform of insight into His dealings, it will be so cleared up? Even supposing the verdict of the moral sense were in contradiction to a very plain and explicit asseveration of His word (a fact of which we can never be perfectly assured, unless we had a much larger insight into His ways and dealings than is permitted to us at present), seeing that His word is infallible, and the moral sense (by Professor Jellett's own admission) fallible,[1] would it not be the more prudent course to trust to His word rather than to the moral sense? Did He not create the moral sense; and are not His

[1] "No faculty of the human mind is infallible, and the moral faculty may err like the rest. But no faculty is less *likely* to err." —*In loc. cit.*

indications therefore more likely to be correct than those which it makes to us? If my watch indicates a certain hour, but on going into the watchmaker's shop, he, casting his eyes on his best chronometer, assures me that my watch is wrong, whom should I sooner believe, the watchmaker or my watch? . . . . However, let me not be thought to imply that, *when all is known*, any *real* discrepancy will ever be found between the statements of God's word and the indications of the most highly developed and cultivated moral sense. Nay, *even before all is known*, I believe that patient thought, and devout waiting upon God for illumination, will often, where the two seem to diverge, serve to bring about an approximation, more or less close, between them. We are not forbidden, but rather the contrary, to attempt to justify to men the ways of God, so far as an insight into them may be gained at present by prayer and devout study. It is this justification—the alleviation of the difficulty on grounds of reason, and by taking other Scriptures into the account, which is attempted in these Sermons.

However feebly I have executed the task undertaken by me, I think I can truly say that I have been animated by a deep reverence for every word of the Divine Master, and by a profound respect for those testimonies of the early Fathers, which, on the whole, may be supposed to represent the sense which Apostolic tradition put upon His words, and that my labours have been accompanied with the earnest and oft-repeated prayer, which I once heard falling from the lips of a good man before joining with others in the study of Holy Scripture,—an expansion of our Collect for Pentecost,—"Grant us, O Lord, by Thy Spirit, to have a right judgment in all things; deliver us from error, if we be in error; preserve us from it, if we be not; and guide us into all truth; for Jesus Christ's sake." And if, in writing on a very arduous and difficult subject, I have inadvertently made any assertion contrary to the mind of the Church of England, as expressed in her Articles and Formularies, or at variance with any sentence of the Universal Church, as represented by the Six First

General Councils, I desire to retract such assertion, and to submit my judgment on the point in question to what has been ruled by wise and holy men of old.

E. M. G.

United University Club, Suffolk Street,
June 1880.

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Sermon I.

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT NOT INCONSISTENT WITH GOD'S JUSTICE.

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not."—Matt. xxv. 41, 42, 43.

Do we believe in our Lord Jesus Christ? If, by believing in any one, be meant accepting all that he says upon his authority, it is to be feared that very many professing Christians do not believe in Christ. They believe, indeed, that such a Person existed, that He said all the words, and did all the actions, which are commonly ascribed to Him. And they receive, too, a large and most important part of the testimony which He bore; it is a comfort to

them to be assured, and therefore they willingly acknowledge, that He came into the world to save sinners; that He loves all mankind, and will have none to perish. All this jumps with the views of God's character which they naturally entertain; flatters them into the hope of an easy reception, whenever they resolve to turn to Him in earnest, and so obtains ready admission to their minds. But certain stern truths which Christ uttered—very plain, pointed, and emphatic truths—they begin by blinking; by never allowing the mind to dwell upon them; by putting away all earnest consideration of them. From blinking they proceed to questioning the consistency of these truths with certain others which are as plainly revealed. The questioning goes on underground in the soil of the mind, until it expands into a doubt. False doctrine, or, which is the same thing, a denial of true doctrine, is insinuated, and the insinuation works like leaven, till it overspreads the understanding. The work ends with the understanding; but it did not begin there. It began with the heart or will. It is a very old observation that what men wish they believe. And

this implies the converse, that what they do not wish they do not believe. They do not like a certain doctrine or class of doctrines; it is repulsive to their feelings, and shocking to contemplate. The will is prepossessed against it, and (this being the case) the understanding is not long before it becomes prejudiced.

But let no one suppose that he really believes in Christ, who believes only the palatable parts of the message which our Lord brought from heaven. Such an one does not believe *any* Christian doctrine because Christ announced it, but because it meets his own views and wishes. He is, in fact, believing his own heart, and not Christ; for where Christ testifies what is repulsive to his own heart, he does not admit the testimony. This is a clear proof that, even when he receives what Christ says, it is only because the doctrine happens to accord with his prepossessions. And shall we be guilty of the folly of receiving the testimony of our own hearts in preference to that of Christ—of those hearts, of which the infallible word of God testifies that they are "deceitful above all things and desper-

ately wicked"? Forbid it, good Lord! and bestow upon us the spirit of true faith, that we may receive every word of Thine with the simplicity of little children.

I shall avail myself of the opportunities of addressing you, so kindly given me by your Rector, to endeavour to meet the chief objections which are urged against the doctrine of everlasting punishment, believing that many thoughtful and pious minds are losing their hold of that doctrine, allowing it to succumb altogether to considerations of God's fatherly love, which they hold to be inconsistent with it. Our argument will be addressed only to those who believe the truths of Christianity in general; for it may be reasonably presumed that no others are present. And as I desire to go to the root of these objections, I will address myself at once to those reasonings and speculations on which they really rest. Most certain it is that the objectors to this doctrine do not *found* their views on Holy Scripture. As being many of them believers in the inspiration of the Bible, and acknowledging the supreme authority of God's Word, they are under the

necessity of showing that the Bible may be so interpreted as not to exclude their views. But probably none of them would maintain that Scripture on the surface favours them. If, rightly understood, the Word of God *is* not (as they contend) really against them, they can hardly themselves deny that it *seems to be* against them. What, for example, can they make of such a passage as my text? The Speaker, as you are aware, is that Man, whom God hath ordained to judge the world in righteousness, and who must be presumed to know, better than any one else, the sentences which He Himself will in that day pronounce. The text is one of these two sentences; and even by itself, but still more when taken in connexion with those other words of His about the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched,[1] it *seems* (I do not say more) to cut off all hope for the condemned. No man, if he had nothing to go upon but these words, could imagine that there was any such hope. No; the idea, so fondly clung to by some, that such hope may still remain, even after the pronunciation of the final

[1] See St. Mark ix. 43-49.

sentence, can only claim, at most, to be reconcileable with Scripture; it is not *found* in Scripture, but *brought* to it. Where, then, is it found? In the reasonings of the human mind. The Judge of all the earth, we know and feel—nay, are we not assured of it by the Bible?[1]—must do right. A punishment disproportionate to the offence for which it is inflicted (as if a judge should sentence a man to the gallows for gathering sticks in a wood which is the property of another), is unjust. Now eternal punishment, it is thought, is a disproportionate punishment for any sin, however great. Any amount of sin, we imagine, is only finite, whereas the punishment has no limits. Ages roll upon ages, but never exhaust it. Therefore we cannot suppose God to inflict eternal punishment for any sin, however heinous. This is the objection which we shall endeavour to meet in the present discourse.

And, first, before going more deeply into the subject, I must raise the question whether we are altogether—even the best of us—competent judges of such a subject. We have all of us exposed ourselves to the sentence, on the fitness and propriety of which

[1] See Gen. xviii. 25.

we are presuming to sit in judgment. As sinners, we have all of us broken God's law, and rendered ourselves liable to the penalty of breaking it. Does not the fact itself disqualify us for a fair criticism? Take the parallel case of crimes against human law. A man has committed a very foul murder, surmounting all that instinctive horror of such a deed, which is a safeguard in our nature against its being committed; and he is lying in gaol under sentence of death for it. The question of the propriety of capital punishment, under any circumstances, is a fair question enough for those who are not themselves implicated in crime; but none of us, I think, would take the murderer's judgment on the fitness and propriety of his sentence, or attach the smallest weight to what he might think about the subject. Of course he thinks lightly of the crime, as having familiarised himself with it by its perpetration. Of course, therefore, he will make great excuses for himself, as all of us do when we have done wrong. And if he should take it into his head (as malefactors often do) that, when it comes to the point, the sentence will not be really put in force,—if he should think that Queen

Victoria, who shows such prompt sympathy with trouble and misfortune wherever found, would at last relent and exercise the royal prerogative of mercy in his favour, the greatest kindness you could do the poor man would be to persuade him that it will not be so, that the idea of mercy is merely the fiction of his own brain. The Queen may be—is—the most tender-hearted of sovereigns ; but she has other subjects besides him, in whose interests she must act, and subjects greatly more deserving of her regard than murderers.

But to proceed to the nature of the alleged objection. When we argue that an eternal punishment inflicted for sins committed in time would be disproportionate, and therefore unjust, are we judging sin as God judges it, and placing ourselves in His point of view? Are we not measuring sin by the square and rule, as if it were something hard and self-contained, and not rather something which contains within itself the possibilities of infinite mischief? Are we not looking at sin rather in its actual achievements than in its spirit and principle? Let me state my meaning more clearly. Just as our bodies, which otherwise in the revolutions of the earth would fly off into

infinite space, are kept in their places by the law of gravitation, which draws them towards the earth's centre, and by the atmosphere, which would offer resistance to any very violent motion of them, so the sinner, while here below, is kept in a certain order by various restraints, which yet do not modify or palliate the wickedness of the inward principles by which he is actuated. Human laws restrain him from very gross crimes. Public opinion, in any decently moral state of society, does the same thing. The forms of religious belief and of public worship, by which he is surrounded, all have the same tendency. To which we must add that in those countries which have received the Gospel, the grace of God is always silently remonstrating in the depth of the sinner's conscience, giving him uneasy forebodings, and stirring in him an inward dissatisfaction with his present life. Held in check as it is by all these curbs, the principle of sin may, as a fact, happen to do comparatively little mischief. But in the estimate of it formed by a moral Agent of perfect holiness, who "searcheth the heart and trieth the reins," the question would rather be what harm it *might* do, *what mischief it has in*

it to do? Suppose the pressure from public opinion, the restraint of human law, the checks of grace in the conscience, to be all suddenly withdrawn—what course would the man then take? Let us suppose him to be a man who is living exclusively to himself; that self—his own worldly interests and gratifications—determine all his actions. It is plain that the tendency here is to set up self on God's throne, as an object of worship. The man *cannot* dethrone God; that is an eternal impossibility; but, as far as in him lies, he is prepared to do it, and might actually do it if hindrances were removed. And shall we be surprised to hear that God, who sees the end from the beginning, who reads the heart intuitively, and marks whither its inward principles are tending, should take into account rather the malignant essence of sin, and the ill which it has in it in embryo, than that which it actually accomplishes? It is not in the least difficult to understand how a certain act may have the largest possibilities of mischief in it, which yet never become actualities. Take the most common-place illustration which suggests itself. A dwelling-house has, in a vault underneath it, a considerable number

of barrels of gunpowder, some closed, some open. A boy carelessly strays into the vault with a light, and thinking only that the darkness of the vault would make it a good place for the exhibition of fireworks, proceeds so to amuse himself. Providentially no harm comes of it, some of the barrels being secured, and others, as is afterwards observed, having been thoroughly damped by a moisture which had percolated through the roof of the vault. Well, the boy has done no actual mischief. But it is easy to see that he might have done, that it lay in his action to do, irreparable mischief. It is due only to providential circumstances that a single soul in the house has survived that foolish frolic.[1] And God, who is a Spirit, judges sin as human tribunals cannot judge it, by its undeveloped tendency. Human tribunals can only consider as a murderer one who actually takes away the life of a fellow-creature. But God says, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer."[2]

[1] The illustration must not be pressed beyond the point for which it is offered, which is a large possibility of mischief that never becomes an actuality,—baneful tendency in an action, which yet, being held in check, produces no outward disorder.

[2] 1 John iii. 15.

But after all, though certain considerations may be advanced which tend to alleviate the difficulty, we are far from thinking that we can, with our present feeble understandings, pierce the cloud which hangs over the dark subject of sin. We are persuaded that there is that about sin which we cannot, with our present capacities, fully comprehend. St. Paul speaks of "the mystery of iniquity;"[1] and we feel sure that in all iniquity there is a mystery, the solution of which would probably, if we could arrive at it, furnish us with an explanation of eternal punishment. No doubt men are apt to conceive of sin as if it were a thing perfectly level to the human understanding. They imagine that a superficial view of the subject easily exhausts it. God has laid down a law for the observance of His rational creature man. Man breaks the law. That is simple enough, and that is all which appears on the surface of the subject. But there is more behind. There is, there must be, in this violation of the law, an infinite, or, if you please, an inconceivable and unutterable malignity. Revealed Truth tells us so by implication. For Revealed Truth speaks

[1] See 2 Thess. ii. 7.

of an atonement for sin, in the absence of which it could not possibly be expiated. Nay, Revealed Truth speaks of an atonement made by a Divine Person, an atonement which possesses all the value, all the costliness, which the Godhead of our Lord Jesus can throw into it. We cannot for a moment imagine that God would have provided this Atonement, unless, in the nature of things, it had been needed. It is outrageous to suppose that He, who bids us not cast our pearls before swine,[1] would have thrown away the treasures of His own most precious Body and Blood, when there was nothing in the nature and necessity of the sinner's case which demanded such a sacrifice. As to what that something is, I lay my hand upon my mouth, and confess myself ignorant. The Atonement is a great mystery; I know that God is certainly just in providing it; but while I am assured, on the one hand, that "righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne," on the other, I feel that "clouds and darkness are round about him."[2] I know nothing but what I am told, and what the commonest reverence towards the divine character leads me to infer. I am

[1] St. Matt. vii. 6. [2] Psalm xcvii. 2.

told that a Divine Person, the Creator Himself, manifested in the nature of a creature, bled and agonized for sin. I *must* believe that a sacrifice infinitely costly was demanded by the necessity of the case. The inference is I think, clear, that in sin there must be something more than I at present see or understand. There is some malignity in transgression, which I cannot fully explain. You have no right to speak of any amount of sin as being, after all, only finite. You are babbling there of what is above our faculties. Might not an atonement made by a creature, if any atonement were needed, have expiated a finite amount of guilt? Tell me not of sin having anything less than a monstrous malignity, so long as I know that the Son of God suffered for it.[1]

[1] It has been suggested to me by a friend, who heard this sermon delivered, that this part of my argument might lie open to an objection of this description; "Christ died for the sin of the whole race; He is 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (St. John i. 29); and the sins of a single individual, however great, are an infinitesimally small contribution to that great aggregate. Therefore,"—such I suppose to be the conclusion to which the objection points,—"although the sin of the world might indeed necessitate an Infinite Sacrifice, it does not follow that the sin of an individual would have done so. Why, therefore, should we suppose that the sins of any individual should merit everlasting

That God does, indeed, apply to sin some very different measure from that on which our own estimate of it is based, may be gathered with tolerable certainty from the moral of the Parable from which our text is taken. It is in every way noteworthy that, as in the Parable of Dives and Lazarus, the rich man's neglect of the beggar who lay at his gate

punishment?" Upon this I can only observe that even the aggregate sin of the whole human race is *finite; it has its limits;* whereas the Sacrifice, being Divine, is of infinite and unlimited worth. There is still, therefore, apparently an enormous disproportion between the sin and the Sacrifice. It is, however, just this estimate of sin by its amount (so much more, or so much less) rather than by the malignity of its principle, which seems to me so peculiarly fallacious, and so foreign to what is probably the view taken of it by the Divine Mind. Adam and Eve transgressed the single commandment given to them; and in their transgression, as in a seed or germ, was wrapped up all the wickedness, which has since been in the history of their descendants developed. We are all regarded in God's sight as contained in "the first man Adam," out of whom we have been drawn by natural generation; and each separate case of human iniquity derives itself from his transgression, and stands in a living relation to it. The various forms of human wickedness show, in a very impressive and emphatic manner, what an evil and bitter thing that first transgression was; but even *had that transgression stood alone,* and had its awful character never been illustrated in the experience of Adam's posterity, it would, I suppose, have demanded the sacrifice of the Son of God for its expiation.

is the only offence which can be alleged in explanation of the torments to which he is consigned in the world beyond the grave; so also, in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, those who are visited with the final curse and banishment into everlasting fire, are characterized entirely by sins of omission. "Inasmuch as ye did it *not*," is the sole ground upon which the sentence is rested by the Eternal Judge. This of itself should be sufficient to apprise us that His thoughts in judgment are not our thoughts, neither our ways His ways.[1] For what is the estimate which we naturally form of sins of omission? Is it not that they are altogether trifling, as compared with those of commission? If a man has done no harm, human law cannot possibly call him to account for having done no good. It asks an effort of the mind,—it requires that we shall put ourselves altogether at a different standing-point from that which we usually occupy,—to see how a man's merely wrapping himself in his own ease, and in indifference to the sufferings of those around, can merit the curse of God and consignment to torments. When we come into the region of these Parables, we are

[1] See Isaiah lv. 8, 9.

evidently moving in a different circle of thought from that, on which our ordinary estimates of sin are based.

And what shall we say to that verse of St. James's Epistle, which sets aside with so high a hand the usual computations of more or less, that colour so largely these ordinary estimates, and pronounces one offence to shut the offender out from the entire precinct of law, and (by consequence) from the hope of salvation except through a Mediator; "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For" (the separate precepts rest upon one and the same authority) "he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law[1]"? It is the violation of His authority which the supreme Legislator regards in an act of sin, which violation of His authority is an element of insubordination among the creatures, tending to overthrow all order in the universe and introduce anarchy.

But now, if sin have indeed a monstrous, inconceivable, and unutterable malignity, as the Atonement

[1] James ii. 10, 11.

certainly shows by implication, may we not see in the doctrine of Eternal Punishment a corresponding evidence of this malignity? The Atonement, on the one hand, and Eternal Punishment, on the other, are two lines of the system of Scriptural theology which converge together, and evidently meet in one and the same point—the infinite malignity of sin. Our observations of the subject are not, and cannot be, taken from this point; if they were, both the one and the other doctrine would be capable of an easy explanation to our understandings. But from our present position we can see sufficiently well thus much, that the Atonement and Eternal Punishment *do* meet somewhere, are only opposite poles of the same great truth respecting the evil of sin. And should any man (professing belief in Christian doctrine) ask me why God should requite finite sin with an infinite punishment, I ask him to expound first why God should demand for such sin, as it is agreed on all hands that He does, an infinitely precious Atonement. And if he should reply that the Atonement is a mystery, and cannot be fully explained, I answer that, probably for the very same reasons,

Eternal Punishment is a mystery, and cannot be fully explained. Both, no doubt, have their ground in the nature of sin, which is beyond our present faculties. And can we wonder that the nature of sin should be at present beyond us? *Some* reasons for its being so are at least very obvious. We live in an atmosphere of sin. Never in our whole lives did we breathe any other atmosphere.

> "Sin is with man at morning break,
> And through the live-long day
> Deafens the ear which fain would wake
> To nature's simple lay."

Sin is acted out before our eyes. Sin is ever present with us in living examples. Sin walks by our side along the highroad of life. Nay, sin whispers in our conscience, throbs in our life-blood, palpitates in our hearts, is part of the fibre of our moral being. Now, can we wonder that such intimate familiarity with sin very much deadens our minds to its malignity? You remember that we said just now that the murderer loses his appreciation of the heinousness of murder, from having familiarised himself with murder by the perpetration of it. And one who (which is

the case with all of us) has familiarised himself with sin by the commission of it, cannot see it in its true colours. We find that we can toy with it, make light of it, speak of it with a sneer, think of it as a thing that *must* be while the world goes on, and resolve it occasionally into human infirmity. Think you that all this could be, if we were enabled to view it at all from God's point of view? Is it not clear that, if we could be drawn out of the element of it for a few moments, sin would be as offensive to our moral sense as pain is to our nerves of bodily feeling? He who is confined in a dungeon, into which only one or two rays of light struggle with difficulty, has at first the sensation of total darkness; but gradually the eye accommodates itself to the outward condition, and begins to distinguish the forms of the objects which surround it. A man who has breathed from childhood no atmosphere but that of an ill-ventilated alley, or a crowded workshop, is not sensible of the foulness of that atmosphere. But let him inhale for a moment or two the sweet breath which wanders over the wild thyme, or the invigorating air which sweeps across the open down, and the atmosphere of the workshop be-

comes to him pestiferous. Similarly, our mental eye has here adjusted itself to the prevailing gloom of sin ; our moral sense here dwells, without any sensible inconvenience, in an atmosphere of moral impurity. We are therefore no competent judges of sin, because we have never known what it is to be righteous. Sin closely resembles one of those loathsome complaints, which are offensive to and repel every one save the poor suffering patient, who is himself the prey of them.

In concluding this branch of an argument, which it is proposed to pursue in subsequent discourses, let me warn you against that defective appreciation of the evil of sin, which lies at the root of the denial of its eternal punishment. A finite will in contradiction to the Infinite Will—we none of us know fully the mysterious evil of such an opposition. But strive to view sin in the light of Christ's Atonement ; view it as demanding His humiliation and clamouring for His sacred blood ; view it as lacerating that holy body, agonizing that spotless mind, and longing to sweep from the face of the earth, with an inveterate animosity, the only pure partaker of our nature who ever trod upon it, and the truth will then, I do not

say be fully revealed, but will, at all events, glimmer upon your apprehensions. And cultivate practically, not an avoidance of sin only, but an abhorrence of it. Say of it, when tempted, "It is deadly mischief, a poison ready to spread through all the blood on its first entrance to the frame; I see not its end from its beginning, nor its frightful developement in its earliest rudiment; but a frightful developement I know that it will have; for 'lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.'"[1] Cherish this feeling towards it by prayer, by effort, by reasoning with yourself on that portion of Divine truth which is clearly revealed; and those shallow hard views of sin, which represent it as an evil to be measured by line and plummet, shall give place to a moral sensibility, which shall be gradually more and more in harmony with the awful sentences of God's inspired Word upon the wicked and ungodly.

[1] St. James i. 15.

Sermon II.

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT NOT INCONSISTENT WITH GOD'S JUSTICE.

(*The same argument continued.*)

From all evil and mischief; from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil; from thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation,

GOOD LORD, DELIVER US.

Sermon II.

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT NOT INCONSISTENT WITH GOD'S JUSTICE.

(*The same argument continued.*)

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."—Matt. xxv. 41.

We are engaged in considering the awful subject of Eternal Punishment, which these words bring before us. The objection against it, to which in our last discourse we endeavoured to give a reply, was drawn from the apparent disproportionateness of the punishment to the offence. Sin is supposed to be finite, while hell is an infinite penalty.

In continuing the argument on the present occasion, we may remark incidentally that there are other Scriptural doctrines (besides that of the Atonement, to which we have already adverted) which do not indeed

explain the eternity of punishment, but which are quite of a piece with it; which are, if I may so say, its counterparts and correlatives, and which, equally with it, lead to the conclusion that God estimates sin by a standard very different from our own—a standard high above out of our reach. It is a dangerous thing to meddle with the theology of the Bible; because all its doctrines, though many of them soar far beyond us into the region of mystery, are yet so wonderfully coherent that to touch one is to imperil the rest. Scriptural theology resembles an arch so constructed that all the greater stones shall be key-stones. Displace any one of these stones, and you will find that the whole fabric falls to pieces under your hands. Dislodge the doctrine of Eternal Punishment from the system of Scriptural theology, and you will find, if you employ against *it* similar objections, that the Atonement itself begins to give way; for if you are determined to reject the idea of a finite sin having an infinite penalty, you will find it at least equally hard, or even more hard, to understand how a finite sin can demand an infinitely precious Sacrifice. But the Atonement is not the *only* fundamental doc-

trine which you shake by dislodging that of Eternal Punishment. What have you to say to the Fall? Here we are in the ruins of the Fall still. If I go into the lanes and alleys of this metropolis, and see flitting by me in rapid succession a thousand spectacles of misery—the sunken eyes, sallow features, and emaciated frames of men and women, who drag out a wretched existence in the filth and tatters of poverty; the corpse of a child being laid out in this garret; while from a low place of resort hard by comes the strong scent of some intoxicating spirit, and the unseemly noise of profane ribaldry, I know that these dens of iniquity are not what God made originally; that the moral nature of man, once a fair and majestic column, has been shattered, and that these are the *débris*. Now, when I turn to the Bible for the account of this (and you will remember that our argument is addressed only to those who accept the *general* outline of Scriptural truth), I find it all traced up to a single act on the part of our first parents; an act which took place considerably more than five thousand years ago, but which, like a stone thrown into the water, has given an impulse to man's will,

which goes circling on, and widening on, as population increases; an act which was neither impure, nor profane, nor cruel, but a simple disobedience to God in a matter which was, of its own nature, indifferent. Every death in the world, and every disease (which is incipient death), every tear, every sorrow, every heartache, every form which suffering has ever assumed (and how manifold are its forms!), is to be traced up, if we accept the Scriptural account of the matter, to this primary disobedience. "The beginning of strife," says the wise man, "is as when one letteth out water."[1] But the proverb might be applied with even more justice to the beginning of sin. Man did but pierce for one moment the restraint with which God's commandment enclosed him. In that instant the floodgates opened, and every form of evil, physical and moral, spread over the whole earth.

Now, we are not about to account for this (nor indeed do we think that, in the present state of our faculties, it can be fully accounted for), but we say that it is very manifestly *all of a piece with Eternal Punishment.* It looks in the same direction; it is

[1] Prov. xvii. 14.

another line converging towards the same point. It is almost as difficult to explain why the eating of forbidden fruit by Adam and Eve should have entailed misery upon millions of their descendants, as to explain why the wicked and ungodly, who have sinned only for threescore years and ten, should be visited with an everlasting punishment. To reject both of these doctrines would be at least consistent ; but that, thank God, no one of us is prepared to do. Believe me, that to accept both is our only reasonable alternative.

But now to return to the objection against Eternal Punishment, drawn from its supposed incompatibility with the justice of God. You complain that an *eternal* punishment is an undue requital of an offence which is measured by time ; but what if the offence should be eternal as well as the punishment? And, reasoning from what we know of our nature and its tendencies, how can it be otherwise? By sin is meant the variance and conflict of a creature's will with the will of the Creator. There is nothing, surely, in the mere passage from this world to another to make this variance cease. The traveller to the unseen realm which lies beyond the grave changes his climate, in-

deed, but not his disposition. "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be."[1] There is a significant passage of the Epistle to the Hebrews, from which it seems necessary to infer that, in all ordinary and normal cases, our probation closes with death, and that thenceforward the will is permanently fixed in the direction which it has taken, either towards God or away from Him :—"As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many ; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin" (without a sin-offering), "unto salvation."[2] We know from other passages of God's Word that "after death" cannot be understood of immediate chronological sequence, for the judgment is always represented as taking place on one day for all mankind, a day which, placing it at its earliest date (for I do not wish to enter into the Millennarian controversy), cannot be before the second Advent of Christ, who will then appear divested (as this passage assures us) of the character of a Saviour, and invested with that of a Judge. If then "after" does not denote immediate

[1] Eccles. xi. 3. [2] Heb. ix. 27, 28.

chronological sequence, what does it denote? It is not easy to see what else the expression can be designed to teach us but that, as the soul passes out of life in point of moral character, such it will abide (at least in its main bias) until the judgment, nay, that its own particular judgment will be in a certain sense, though not formally and publicly, passed upon it at death, in virtue of which it will be consigned either to Paradise, or to that district of Hades in which the soul of the rich man in the Parable is exhibited to us, in torments indeed, but not the torments of the final condition. As to this final determination of the character at death, consider how strongly and vividly it is brought out by the comparison which is employed, "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." We know that He was not, is not, cannot be more than once offered, that "this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."[1] His death was a great crisis in the history of man, "finishing the transgression and making an end of sin,"[2] closing the account for it (if

[1] Heb. x. 12. [2] See Dan. ix. 24.

I may so say) as regards its meritorious expiation. And the implication clearly is, that an individual's death is a similar great crisis in the history of the individual, closing up and balancing the account of his life, and leaving the character which has seemed through life to oscillate, fixed in its bias—a character which has permanently taken its side either for good or evil. And lest we might suppose that, at all events, in the ages succeeding the general judgment, some alteration of the character of the ungodly through the agency of sanctified suffering might be looked for, there stand in that last Chapter of the Book of Revelation, which carries us down to the close of all things, those awful words which seem designed to exclude this hope; "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still."[1] And the last picture exhibited to the eye in that book is the awful condition of those who have no part in the holy city, without a word thrown in to intimate that the exile is not to be eternal; "For

[1] Rev. xxii. 11.

without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."[1] With these passages of God's word before us, even if none of them should be considered by the advocates of ultimate universal salvation as explicit as they might be, it is impossible, I think, to deny that Holy Scripture seriously discourages the idea of a probation and possible change of character on the other side of the grave, and leads us to conclude that death, in all ordinary cases, fixes the main bias of the character, so that it never alters afterwards in an opposite direction.[2]

[1] Rev. xxii. 15.

[2] In the (so-called) Second Epistle of Clemens Romanus, a Patristic homily, perhaps erroneously ascribed to Clement, but bearing traces of a date not later than the first half of the second century, there is a very interesting passage, in which the writer bases an exhortation to present repentance upon the immutability of character after death, and the impossibility of finding in another world a place for repentance.

Ch. viii. "While, then, we are upon earth, let us repent. For we are [while in this life] as clay in the hands of the artificer. For as the potter, if he shall make a vessel, and it should be shaped awry, or broken in his hands, moulds it afresh; but if he shall first have cast it into the furnace of fire, he will then do no more to correct it; so we also, as long as we are in this world, may repent with our whole heart of the evil things we have done in the flesh,

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I say, *never alters afterwards in an opposite direction.* But it may, nay rather, it surely must alter in

in order that we may be saved by the Lord, while we yet have an opportunity of repentance. For after that we have passed out of this world we shall no longer have it in our power to confess or to repent *there*," [that is, in the other world]. And at the end of the preceding Chapter he applies to those who have not preserved inviolate the seal of their Baptism, the awful threatening of Isaiah (lxvi. 24), (as it is given in the Septuagint), which our Lord also cites as descriptive of Hell in St. Mark ix. 44, 46, 48—"their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be for a gazing stock unto all flesh."

The passage conclusively proves *what those Christians thought and taught on the subject of human probation and the doom of the ungodly, who lived in the generation immediately succeeding the Apostles,* and when there were probably those upon earth who had seen St. John. The possible refashioning of character during life, and its hopeless condition when life has expired, could not be more forcibly illustrated than by the image of the potter's vessel.

Justin Martyr, who was born in the first quarter of the second century, and in all probability wrote his *Apology* before A.D. 150, speaks thus of the contrast presented by the Christian doctrine respecting the doom of the ungodly to that which Plato (of whose philosophy Justin had been, previously to his conversion, a devoted admirer) had set forth (in the Timæus and elsewhere):—"To speak briefly then" [*Apologia*, i. 8], "these are the things which we expect, and have learned from Christ, and teach. Plato, indeed, in like manner asserted that Rhadamanthus and Minos would punish the unrighteous when they came before them. We assert that the same thing will happen, but [that the punishment will be decreed] by Christ, and while men have the same bodies [as they

the same. For, take this truth of the *permanence* of the dispositions with which we have gone out of

had upon earth] with their souls, and that they shall be punished with a punishment which shall be everlasting [*αἰωνίαν κόλασιν κολασθησομένων*], and not only, as he stated, for the period of a thousand years."—[Justini *Opp.* pp. 47, 48 ; Hagæ, 1742.]

Tertullian (*circ.* A.D. 160-240) thus speaks in his *Apology* (written probably at the end of the second or beginning of the third century) on the nature of the fire of hell. The passage, however disfigured by the writer's ignorance of natural science, may show what his views, and those of the Christians of his day, were on the subject before us :—"Therefore [after the general resurrection] there will be no more death nor subsequent resurrections, but we shall be the same which we then are, and remain the same ever after. The worshippers of God will be with God for ever, clothed upon with a substance proper to eternity ; while the profane, and those whose hearts are not whole with God, will be in penal fire equally perennial [with the happiness of the blessed], from the divine nature of which they will derive the endowment of incorruptibility. The philosophers, too, recognise the difference between occult and common fire. Quite different is that fire which serves for the uses of man, from that which showeth itself in God's judgments, whether it collects itself into the thunderbolts which fall from heaven, or belches itself forth from the earth through the cones of mountains ; for this [latter fire] does not consume what it burns ; but while it wastes, it [at the same time] repairs. And thus it comes to pass that mountains which ever burn still endure, and that he who is struck by heaven's lightning is [thenceforth] safe from being reduced to ashes by any other fire. This then will serve as witness of the eternal fire ; this is a foreshadowing of that eternal judgment which will feed perpetually the pains of the ungodly. Mountains

life, side by side with the other accessories which *must* attach to the case of the condemned. We

are burned and yet continue. What [else can we suppose will happen] to the wicked and the enemies of God?"—Tertullian, *Apol.*, chap. xlviii.

Cyprian, in his *Liber ad Demetrianum* (written about A.D. 252), which may be regarded as an Apology for Christianity, Demetrian having ascribed to the impiety of the Christians the then prevalent famine and plague, thus writes, both on the pains of hell, and on the termination of man's probation with this present life:—"Believe Him who will give to those who believe the recompence of eternal life. Believe Him who will inflict on unbelievers eternal punishment in the flames of Gehenna. What glory will then accrue to faith, what pains to unbelief, what joy will be to them that believe, what sadness to them that believe not, that they have been unwilling to believe here [below], and cannot now repent that they might believe! The ever-burning Gehenna, a penalty devouring with living flames, will consume those consigned to it; nor will there be any means by which these torments may have respite nor end. . . . He, who here gazed upon us [while undergoing persecution from him] for a time, will there be perpetually gazed upon by us; and the brief enjoyment which cruel eyes found in the persecutions made [by their owners] will be repaid by [the persecutor's becoming] a perpetual gazing-stock, according to the truth of holy Scripture, which saith: 'Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be extinguished; and they shall be for a gazing-stock unto all flesh.' . . . . . Then will there be penal suffering without any fruit of penitence, vain and unprofitable wailing, and cries for mercy which take no effect; and those who have been unwilling to believe in eternal life will (but all too late) come to believe in eternal punishment. . . . . When we have passed out

do not ask you, God forbid! to picture to yourselves our Heavenly Father, or our loving Lord, using

of the place where we now are [*sc.* this world], there is then no place for repentance, no power of making satisfaction. Here it is that [eternal] life is either lost or held fast. Here, therefore, we must provide for our eternal salvation by the worship of God and by bringing forth the fruits of faith. Nor let any one be retarded either by his sins or by his years from coming to obtain salvation. So long as a man abides still in this world, penitence never comes too late. The way of approach to God's mercy lieth always open, and to those who seek and understand the truth the access is easy."—Cyprian, *Liber ad Demetrianum* [*Opp.*, Parisiis, 1726, p. 224.]

Minucius Felix, another of the early Apologists, who flourished about A.D. 230, repeats, in his dialogue *Octavius* (ch. xxxiv.), very much what Tertullian had said.

"For there" [*sc.* in hell, which he seems to think was adumbrated by the heathen myths about the Stygian lake, etc.], "the subtle fire" (sapiens ignis) "burns and repairs, consumes and nourishes; and as lightnings waste not the bodies they blast, and as Ætna and Vesuvius and other volcanoes burn and are not expended with burning; so that penal flame [of hell] is not fed by diminishing the bodies of the condemned, but is fuelled by preying upon without consuming them."

The value of these extracts from the early Apologists is, that they show what views were taken of the subject in primitive days, when Apostolic traditions still lingered on the earth. The Apologists themselves were mostly men of learning and cultivation, and it is incredible that, in defending Christianity, they should have allowed themselves to state either what was not generally received, or what shocked their own moral sense, and was regarded

their wisdom to devise, and their power to inflict, torments on the lost. Far, for ever far from our minds be any conceptions of God and of the Lamb, which invest them with the dark attributes of cruelty, or represent them as wreaking a relentless wrath upon bodies and souls, which have already in this life been the prey of many sorrows. We leave

by themselves and others as difficult of reconcilement with the attributes of God.

It is, however, fair to state that in Justin's *Cum Tryphone Judæo Dialogus* (ch. v.), there is a passage from which it does seem that the idea of a future annihilation of the wicked had crossed the writer's mind [p. 107, *Opp.*, Hagæ, 1742]. (The subject of the section is whether the soul is intrinsically and inherently immortal.)

"But, however, I do not assert that all souls die; for that verily were profitable (ἔρμαιον) to the wicked. But what then? [I assert] that the souls of the pious remain somewhere in a better place, but those of the unrighteous and evil in a worse place, awaiting the time of judgment. And then the one [class], when they shall have been shown to be worthy of God, die no more, but the others are punished [αἱ δὲ κολάζονται], *so long as God wills them to exist and to be punished.*" A learned friend, with whom I have communicated on the subject of this passage, seems to think that the support it might seem to give to Annihilationism is much weakened by the context. Justin "seems there to be merely denying that man is immortal apart from the continuous fiat of God."

those conceptions of the Divine Being to the worshippers of Odin, of Thor, of Juggernaut, and aver that our God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all; His very justice, though awful, is loveable, as seen in the light of Christ's Atonement. We only ask you to endeavour, by an effort of the imagination, to realise to yourselves what (in the nature of things) *must* become of a sinner who is—not persecuted, but simply—abandoned, by God. Here is a will at variance with God's will. Consider what its circumstances will be. All those checks and hindrances which we adverted to in our last Sermon, and which in this condition of existence kept it in a certain order, gone at once. The grace of God, with all its checks, remonstrances, secret whispers, admonitions — with all the unexpected softenings and sudden relentings, which it occasionally engenders—withdrawn at once and for ever. Human laws restraining no more. Public opinion exerting no more any pressure for good. Did I say no more any pressure for good? But will not its pressure be uniformly for evil? Think you, we can ever rid ourselves of the operation of the law, by which we take our tone from the associates with whom

we are thrown? Think you that a man, while he remains a man, can herd continually with others, and yet be exempt from the influence of their views, their sentiments, their conduct? If not, what, think you, *must* be the natural effect of exclusive association with those, the very best of whom are selfish and godless, and the worst of whom are utterly wicked and criminal? I said just now that the character would not, after death, alter its bias in an *opposite* direction; but do you think that, under such circumstances, it can avoid going further in the direction which it has already taken? There is a very simple method of obtaining an answer to such a question. We may obtain it from experience. What, as a fact, is the effect of association with characters exclusively godless and selfish? Let a man have no other associates than indolent, easy, prosperous worldlings, who, without really caring for him, are attracted by his brilliant social qualities, and reciprocate with him freely in that give-and-take hospitality of the world, which our Lord has characterized as fundamentally selfish in those cutting words of His; "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy

brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours ; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee ;"[1] "If ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again."[2] Supposing him to enter into the atmosphere of this society with some sort of spiritual aspiration alive in his heart, and with a high standard in his mind of what is required from him as a Christian, is the heaven-born spark likely to be fanned into a flame, or the high standard to be maintained, in such an element? Is it not, *must* it not be (putting out of the question a very extraordinary measure of God's grace, which might possibly be *granted in this life*), the very reverse? Spirituality cannot be kept alive, if our only intercourse be with persons spiritually dead. And what is the effect of constant association with vice and crime, of daily and hourly fellowship with those whom society has outlawed? Let our prisons and our penal settlements answer that question. Why do we seclude from one another the prisoners in our gaols, but because it has been well ascertained by

[1] St. Luke xiv. 12. [2] St. Luke vi. 34.

experience that to herd unprincipled and wicked men together, and give them opportunities of intercourse, is to nourish a moral gangrene, which quickly spreads itself over all the inmates of a prison, and soon renders desperate those milder cases of guilt, which do not, if taken early, seem remediless? My brethren, in the drear abode of which we are speaking, there will be none but Heaven's outlaws,—those who have been thrust, or rather have thrust themselves, out of the pale of the Divine law, and out of the communion of saints and angels. Will not the moral mischief in each of them be aggravated by contact with his neighbour? Will not the will of each of them be hardened by his associates into a more stubborn rebellion against God, into a louder and more impious defiance of the will and of the judgments of the Most High? And if, all checks upon it being withdrawn, and all fuel to it being administered, this rebellion—this defiance—be fomented as time wears on, will not the sin be eternal? And if such be the case, shall it surprise us if the punishment should be eternal also?

Perhaps, however, it will be thought (and this is

the secret sentiment of many a heart, and perhaps the great let and hindrance to a full belief of the doctrine of Eternal Punishment) that there is a certain incompatibility between hell, as we commonly picture it to ourselves, and the least vestige of human sympathy and kindness. And seeing that, in many thoroughly bad and godless men, these traces of sympathy linger to the last, and certainly do redeem their character from the charge of utter badness, we imagine that an eternal punishment would be for them an excessive and inappropriate requital of their guilt. It should certainly serve as a warning that reasoning of this kind may not be altogether safe, that the rich man in the Parable of Dives and Lazarus, while in torments, is yet represented as exhibiting one moving trait of natural affection—"I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them; lest they also come into this place of torment." But not to press too much upon this (for it may be fairly said that our Lord wished to bring out certain lessons in that Parable, which could not otherwise be brought out

than by putting some such request into the mouth of Dives), let us argue rather from the reason of the case, and from what we know by experience of the constitution of our nature. Granted that even the worst man, on the first moment of his consignment to perdition, has something of human sympathy abiding in his moral nature, how long is it to be supposed that, under the circumstances, he will retain it? Ah! my brethren, there is one feature of the circumstances of the condemned, the bare conception of which, the very name of which, will crush out all human sympathy from the heart; and that feature is DESPAIR. The judgment of the great day is called by the inspired writer to the Hebrews, "*eternal judgment;*"[1] that is, it will be a judgment whose effects, a sentence whose duration, when once it is pronounced, will be everlasting. I, of course, am well aware that an immense amount of learning and research has been laid out in the attempt to show that, when applied to the doom of the wicked, the word here translated "eternal" is to be understood as signifying nothing more than "through ages yet to come," without any

[1] κρίματος αἰωνίου, Heb. vi. 2.

implication that such ages will be interminable. But it has been often, and (I think) satisfactorily, alleged on the other side, that the very same word is used by our Lord, in almost the same breath (in St. Matt. xxv. 46), to denote the recompence of the righteous, and that it is in the highest degree improbable that in one and the same short verse the word should be used in two different senses. Add to which that, while it may be admitted that, in certain connexions, the word signifies a terminable period, it cannot be questioned that in other connexions (as, for instance, where we read of "the everlasting God," "the eternal Spirit"), it must denote a period without end.[1] I understand "eternal judgment," therefore, in the sense of an irrevocable sentence, which takes effect throughout eternity,—a sentence which, in its operation upon the ungodly, precludes them from hope, as surely the very terms of the sentence ("Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels") seem to every unsophisticated reader to do. And understanding the term thus, I say that sym-

[1] See the note on this vexed and perplexed word in the next Sermon, where it is fully discussed.

pathy is a flower which must perforce die in the barren soil of utterly desponding misery. Or, I would rather say that hope and sympathy are two twin flowers, which grow on the same stalk, which are nourished by the same juices, and both of which fade if those juices are withdrawn. Exclude all hope, and you exclude all sympathy. You may approximate to this awful condition in this life. Confine prisoners in a low dungeon, and let day after day dawn and fade upon them, and yet no day bring their deliverance, until at length hope deferred maketh the heart sick, and they resign themselves to a doom which, they become gradually aware, is only to end with their lives, and just crawling forward to receive their miserable pittance of bread and water, afterwards lie all the livelong day with folded hands and head drooping on the breast; and though we will not deny that, at the beginning of their captivity, they may have relieved one another with the interchange of kind and pitiful words, yet we assert that, by degrees, all the little interest still alive in their hearts will centre in self, will draw itself every day into a narrower circle around that nucleus.

When this moral process is entirely completed, as perhaps it very rarely (if ever) is in this life, the man then ceases to be a man, and becomes a devil. No man is a devil at present ; with the fountain of hope and sympathy still salient in his heart, a man has in his nature the *capability* of renewal by Divine grace, and the nucleus round which a new life and a new mind may form. But choke up this fountain effectually, and you abolish the distinction which subsists between men and fallen angels—a fact which our Lord recognises in our text, when He says that the everlasting fire is prepared for the devil and his angels. Not prepared for men, observe, while still they are men. While yet there is a trace of humanity about them, they could not feel the full horrors of that torment ; but let hope die out of them ; let milk of human kindness dry up at the source ; then the image and superscription of God, stamped upon human nature in its first minting, is utterly effaced. Their nature has become demoniacal. Shall we wonder if their doom be demoniacal also ?

I postpone to another opportunity an answer to

the objection that Eternal Punishment is inconsistent with the love of God. How! more Sermons on this most painful and repulsive topic, of which one would think that any preacher of ordinary sensibility would wish to wash his hands as speedily as possible! Indeed, brethren, most willingly would we avoid such topics, were it possible, consistently with ministerial faithfulness, to do so; but who must be held responsible for the discussion of them but those who deny the old established creed of Christendom on the subject, and employ themselves in building up other theories of the future of the impenitent, into agreement with which they painfully cramp the words of Christ and His Apostles? Nor, I fear, can it be alleged that the denial of the eternal punishment of the wicked is confined to a few religious speculatists, who have little or no influence with the Church in general. Rather, it is in the air just now; devout and thoughtful men are taking the new doctrine avowedly under their wing, and employing all the resources of their learning and eloquence in supporting it. Who shall wonder if it find favour with unlearned and frivolous worldlings, by no means

unwilling to think that the sanctions of religion are not so very stringent as they are usually represented? These persons are not sceptics; for a very large amount of Scriptural truth they receive and assent to. There is much in Christianity which is chivalrous, lofty, generous, beautiful, which appeals to all the gentler, better, kindlier feelings of the human heart. And there is quite a tendency abroad among the religionists of the day to appreciate *this* element of the truth. God's fatherly character, the gentleness and the perfect humanity of Christ, the hopefulness of the Gospel, even for the worst cases—most Divine topics truly, and of the most fundamental importance—are all points brought into strong relief. But we fear that with one school of religious thought especially—a school whose influence is daily spreading—there is a tendency to found upon these vital truths what we will call a sentimental religion, a religion of warm flesh and blood (if I may so express myself), which lacks the hard vertebræ and solid framework of definite doctrine; a religion made up of cordial potions and mollifying ointments, but from which the bitter of strong, wholesome, active medi-

cine, is carefully excluded. God is a Father, but not a Judge ; Christ is a Lamb, but not the Lion of the tribe of Judah ; the Holy Ghost is a dove, but not a consuming fire. We are getting to speak mincingly not only of error but of sin ; it is human infirmity ; we all partake in it ; God is surely not less pitiful than man is, and so forth. Ah ! my brethren, the wounds of the soul are too deep to be reached by a gospel of mere sentiment. Rosewater is very refreshing as an external application in health, but he is a sorry physician, surely, who seeks to cure a gangrene with rosewater. And, to speak very plainly, I am *afraid* of a gospel which conceals the desperate evil of man's heart, and his imminent peril of everlasting damnation, and speaks to him only the smoother parts of the truth. A gospel which muffles up hell from human view, speaks of it at best under its breath, and too often makes insinuations against it, is certainly not our Lord's Gospel ; and we want none other than His.

But God forbid that we should represent His Gospel to you otherwise than as full of brightest hope and encouragement to all who will part company

with their sins. Your character is at present in a state of flux, developement, formation ; it has in it at present all the capabilities of saintliness and glory. There is that nucleus of hope and sympathy in it, which is the relic, however shattered, of the image of God. There is the Baptismal spark, which, though lying perhaps under a heap of rubbish and corruption, may still be stirred up into a flame. And if we point you to the dark gulf of moral ruin, in which the persistently impenitent and unbelieving shall be eventually plunged, it is only to lead you to look up from its brink to Him, who from above stretches out to you the rescuing hand of sympathy and hope. Of sympathy ; for "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."[1] There is something in His heart of love which, if you do but appeal to it, will surely make an echo to your most intimate and most sorrowful experience. And of hope ; for (according to the ancient hymn, which, though uninspired, has all the noble simplicity of Inspiration about it), He hath

[1] Heb. iv. 15.

"opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers;" He hath entered in Himself, and now says to each one who desires to follow, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength."[1] The atoning work, the mediating work, is all completed; there is here nothing left for human prayer or effort to do. The province of human effort lies in the will to be holy, and separate from sin. Hast thou the will? Then "Stretch forth thy hand," and the Lord, who alone can do so, shall confer the required strength. And it shall be with thee as it was with the man in the synagogue of old. In the act of stretching it out, the virtue which is in Christ shall visit the withered hand, and thou shalt put it forth to do works of righteousness from the constraining motives of gratitude and love.[2]

[1] Rev. iii. 8. [2] See St. Mark iii. 1-6.

Sermon III.

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT NOT INCONSISTENT WITH GOD'S LOVE.

From all evil and mischief; from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil; from thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation,

GOOD LORD, DELIVER US.

Sermon III.

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT NOT INCONSISTENT WITH GOD'S LOVE.

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."—Matt. xxv. 46.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord."—Isaiah lv. 8.

In the two previous discourses we have examined the alleged inconsistency between the doctrine of Eternal Punishment and the Justice of God. Another objection made to the doctrine is its alleged inconsistency with God's Love; and this it is which we propose now to examine.

"God is love"[1]—a statement which, for our great consolation, is twice distinctly made in the Holy Scripture. Surely love, as we conceive of it, cannot allow of any creatures suffering throughout eternity?

[1] John iv. 8, 16.

Now, first, let me remark that all arguments of this kind are peculiarly unsafe, because we do not know thoroughly the subject on which we are arguing. God's nature, character, and method of dealing, is just the most mysterious and difficult subject, on which the human mind can be exercised. He has Himself expressly warned us, in that passage of the Prophet Isaiah which forms part of my text, that His views and methods of proceeding are different from our own. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." It is true, no doubt, that this must be understood with those limitations, which other passages of Holy Scripture put upon it. We could not assert, without contradicting other parts of the Bible, that the thoughts and ways of man are utterly and in all cases unlike those of God. Man, we are expressly told, was created in the image of God;[1] and, undoubtedly, vestiges of the Divine image, though much marred and blurred by the Fall, are still traceable in human character and conduct. These vestiges are the foundation of many of our Lord's Parables; so that if you should say

[1] Gen. i. 27.

absolutely, and in an unqualified manner, that man's ways and thoughts are utterly unlike God's, you would cut away the ground on which those Parables stand. If God does not resemble man in the warm welcome which He gives to erring but penitent children; in His resentment at a slighted invitation; in His being won by importunity; the Parables of the Prodigal Son, of the Marriage of the King's Son, and of the Friend at Midnight, must fall to the ground at once; for they are all built upon and imply some sort of parallel between God's sentiments and dealings and those of man, in virtue of man's having been made in God's image. And yet there is a truth of the utmost importance in the passage of Isaiah, as also in Zophar's challenge as to the insufficiency of man's faculties in estimating the character and dealings of God; "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than hell; what canst thou know?"[1] God's ways and thoughts, though they may run parallel with man's for a certain distance, strike off at a tangent at last,

[1] Job. xi. 7, 8.

soar aloft, and lose themselves in the clouds of mystery. What conceivable resemblance is there between the ways of God and man in the mysterious transaction of saving a sinner, which it pleases Him to do by imputing the penitent sinner's guilt to Christ, and Christ's righteousness to the sinner? Or, again, if we are to judge God's thoughts and dealings by our own, how can the principle announced in the Second Commandment, of visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation, be justified? Or how can predestination to life—that "everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) He hath constantly decreed by His counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour"[1]—be satisfactorily made to square with our human ideas of justice? The analogy often suggested between this way of God and the royal prerogative of mercy, as extended to some condemned criminals and not to others, quite breaks down when

[1] Article xvii.

it is considered that the prerogative is never extended without either some extenuating circumstances in the crime, or some real doubt whether it has been committed. The deepest instincts of our hearts, indeed, assure us that God must be, by the necessity of His nature, eternally just—that the Judge of all the earth must do right; but it is a justice which the human mind, with its present faculties, is incapable of fathoming; as the heavens are higher than the earth, so is God's justice, in these exercises of it, higher than ours. His way is in the sea, and His path in the great waters, and His footsteps are not known.[1]

Since, then, some of God's ways and dealings run parallel to man's, while some exhibit no parallel at all, when—this is the critical question—may we, and when may we not, form a safe judgment of God's views and sentiments from our own? The answer is that we can only do so when we have either facts or Revelation—the revelation of God's word or that of His works—to guide us. In either of these regions —the region of fact or the region of Revelation—we are perfectly safe; but go a single step beyond them,

[1] See Psalm lxxvii. 19.

and every step you then make is attended with hazard. A man can walk very freely and agreeably by daylight and on the land; so freely and agreeably, that on a fine bracing morning he might fancy his limbs and his power of self guidance equal to anything. But there are certain conditions in which the free use of his limbs would be attended with very considerable danger, and in which quite his most rational course would be to sit still, and not to use them. All very well in the light. All very well on *terra firma*. But what if a man, in a conceit of the competence of his own physical powers, should walk out into the darkness, or walk off the shore into the sea? It needs no prophet to tell us what the result would be. The light and the land are the only safe elements for walking. And similarly, if a man wishes to speculate on the character and dealings of the most High, and to use freely the play of his mental muscles on such a subject, he is safe so long as he keeps within the notices of fact and the notices of Revelation. What God has done, He is likely to do again; that is a good argument. What God says that He will do, it is certain that He will do; that is a

better. But if I slip out of both these districts, and fancy-free begin to expatiate in thought as to what God is likely to do, or (according to my notions) ought to do, I shall go very little way without meeting with some intellectual casualty, and perhaps making some fatal blunder.

What then does fact, and what does Revelation say, which may serve as a clue to our speculations on the subject of Eternal Punishment?

1*st. As to fact.* What does fact say? You object against Eternal Punishment that it is inconsistent with God's well-known and well-approved love for the human race, to suppose that He will allow certain numbers of the race to languish on through endless ages in hopeless misery. No *man* of the slightest sensibility can bear to see an animal in pain. If a horse break his leg, or a worm is accidentally divided by our spade, it is an instinct, and a righteous instinct, not to allow the suffering to proceed: kill the poor writhing beast at once, and make an end of his misery. (You see we have no desire to understate the argument against us; but honestly put it in the best shape we can.) And shall not our most loving Father be moved

by analogous feelings of compassion? The Power which has created can of course destroy ;—can annihilate. Will not this be rather the end of the wicked and ungodly than eternal misery,—that the fiat of the Almighty Being should cancel their immortality? should say of each of them, "Conscience, cease to reflect; pulses, cease to beat; heart, cease to feel; man, cease to be."

Well; that certainly seems very plausible. And if we felt it safe to form any notions on such a subject with no further guidance than our own sensibilities, we freely confess that this would be our view. But we prefer to be guided by facts, though they may rudely dash all our fine theories to the ground. We feel that facts are stubborn things. It is the true principle of all philosophy, the principle on which Newton and Galileo made their great discoveries, the principle which Bacon pointed out as the only one by whose application the sciences can be effectually forwarded, to keep close to fact in forming our conclusions, and to disregard conjecture, however plausible, when it conflicts with fact. And the fact here is, that God, whatever His attributes may be, does allow misery

in this corner of His universe ; has allowed misery for well-nigh six thousand years without ever interfering, as it was always competent for Him to do, to stop it. There it is under His eyes ; and there it was in our fathers' days, and in the days of the remotest generation of our ancestors. And ah ! my brethren, what a sum total of suffering it is ! Where will you look that you will not see bleeding hearts, wasted frames, bodies dropping into the grave, spirits sinking beneath their burden ? It seems to me, in reviewing the sum of human misery, as if a great "De profundis" was going up to heaven continually from the heart of the whole race, as it were from the heart of one man ; "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord : Lord, hear my voice."[1] Job and Jeremiah, deep thinkers each of them on the ways of God, when writhing under the common anguish, mooted immediately the question which is so peculiarly incapable of solution ; "If I am to suffer thus, why does not God make an end of me ?" "Why died I not from the womb ? why did I not give up the ghost, when I came out of the

[1] Ps. cxxx. 1, 2.

belly? For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest."[1] The question, if pursued, resolves itself of course into the general enquiry, Why does God permit evil? Why, having the power to prevent, did He suffer it to enter into the world? That is a question which, with our present faculties, we can never satisfactorily answer. All that we can suggest towards a solution is, that if it be God's great purpose to glorify Himself by self-manifestation, and if He is determined that His mercy, which is the most glorious feature of His character, shall be manifested, this could not be without sin and consequent misery; for, in the absence of sin and misery, mercy, as distinct from goodness, would have no scope, no opportunity of showing itself. But even if we cannot account for the fact, we cannot help seeing and admitting it. The veriest child cannot be blind to it. It may be, it is, an ugly fact, a very uncomfortable fact, a fact which I would gladly not look at if I could help it; but it is like a low lintel to the door of a very tall man; we knock our heads against this ugly fact, as often as we go

[1] Job. iii. 11, 13.

out of our houses,—we are brought into daily collision with it by a hard experience. My brethren, you do not the less believe in God's tender love for you because of this fact. You do not the less believe that God gave His all, His only begotten Son, to save mankind. We know you do not. Then, if the fact of His having permitted enormous evil and incalculable misery for five thousand years is not, in your apprehension, inconsistent with His love, why should the doctrine of Eternal Punishment be so?

And here I am met by the objection, that the sufferings of this life "are temporary, and may be remedial,"[1] and that between sufferings of this kind and the love of God there *is* no essential incompatibility, whereas eternal sufferings, which are purely penal, not designed for, and not issuing in, the reformation of the offender, do seem to be incompatible with the Divine love. To which I reply that, though the sufferings of this life *may* indeed be remedial, and often are so, it is a simple fact that a vast amount of them *are not so*, work no sort of moral improvement in the sufferer,

[1] These were the exact words in which the objection was communicated to me by a correspondent.

but rather aggravate the evil which is in him, wrap him up in himself, make him sullen and morose, and sometimes defiant and blasphemous. Such was the case with the tortures, which the impenitent malefactor (whose case will come before us on a later occasion), underwent upon the cross. Indeed, the natural tendency of all suffering is to make the man morally worse, instead of better, by wrapping him in himself; and in those numerous instances, where it has the contrary effect, where it chastens, softens, subdues, humbles, brings a man to his knees before God (as in King Manasseh's case[1]), so that he is afterwards enabled to say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted;"[2] it is only because God's sovereign grace (which, like the fabled touch of Midas, can turn all things into gold) supersedes the operation of the ordinary moral law, and makes the suffering productive of a right frame of mind. If we will accept the Scriptural account of the matter, suffering in its original design was simply and merely *punitive*, that is to say, it was a recompence of man's misdeeds, brought about by the retributive justice of

[1] See 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11-14. [2] Psalm cxix. 71.

God. The sorrow and subjection of the woman, the labour of the man on a stubborn soil, productive of useless and noxious weeds, and finally his death, with all the sickness and miseries, which forced an entrance into his condition in the train of death, were originally a requital of his sin, and nothing more.[1] And this is still the original character of human suffering; and apart from God's grace, which often sanctifies and utilises it, taking it up into the sphere of the spiritual life, and employing it as an agency there, it has no other character. It is always the retribution of sin in the human race, and very often (as in the case of the drunkard's *delirium tremens*, and the spendthrift's poverty) the retribution of sin in the individual. Now then, taking a case of the latter sort, a case in which a man's suffering is clearly the punishment of his own sin, and a "punishment which ends in the excision of the offender, and which has plainly nothing remedial that we know of" (and "the whole wide world is full of such instances"[2]), why should it be held in-

[1] See Gen. iii. 16-20.

[2] These words are cited from Dr. Pusey's Sermon on "Everlasting Punishment."—[Parker, 1864] p. 6.

compatible with God's love that, *so long as the sufferer exists, and exists in the same state of mind,* the suffering will still continue? You may of course speculate on the possibility of his *not* continuing in the same state of mind. You may suppose that the grace, which here has been rejected by him, will beyond the grave deal with him still, and bring to bear upon his will a stronger moral artillery of persuasion. But such an hypothesis has no real support from any passage of Holy Scripture, and, to say the least, is absolutely discouraged by more than one passage. Or you may take the other alternative. Discarding the doctrine of man's immortality, though it seems to be graven on man's heart almost as indelibly as the doctrine of God's existence is, you may suppose that God will annihilate the wicked eventually. But on this hypothesis, what account can be given why He should not have annihilated them previously? If His love forbids their suffering after a certain point in the future, why has it allowed them to suffer so long in the past? If His mercy demands their extinction some thousands of years hence, why has He never extinguished them at an

earlier period of their career, and thus stopped a vast deal both of wickedness and sorrow? Nay; why should He have brought them into existence at all, if penal suffering be incompatible with His love, and if He foreknew that they were to sin and suffer?

2. But there is a still stronger branch of the argument than that which is drawn from facts. Revelation has spoken on the subject of Eternal Punishment. The Revelation of *the Word* has spoken very clearly and explicitly. To a congregation who may be presumed to be competently acquainted with Holy Scripture, I will not quote the various passages which might be quoted. Still less will I quote ambiguous passages, which are capable of receiving another and lower application. Let us put aside even what Apostles have said of being "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord,"[1] and so forth. Let us go to the fountain-head at once. If we are to receive such terrific testimonies, it will be satisfactory to receive them from our LORD'S own lips, bathed and steeped, as it were, in that infinite love which would

1 See 2 Thess. i. 9.

never inflict an unnecessary wound upon our sensibilities. And the truth is, that it is Christ Himself who is so terribly explicit on this subject. Look at the Parable of Dives and Lazarus. "Oh! that *is* a parable ; the lying in Abraham's bosom is not capable of a literal interpretation ; it must be taken figuratively, as implying intimate communion with the saints who have gone before us to their rest." Well, so it is. The discourse *is*, no doubt, more or less figurative; but it conveys to our feeble apprehensions some definite truth, though conveying it in a glass darkly. What is the truth ? Nothing less than this surely, that every selfish worldling shall be intensely miserable after his death. Might I not say, *eternally* miserable? Is not this clearly implied, if not expressed? There is a great gulf fixed between the blessed and the condemned, which cannot be crossed. This seems positive enough against the idea that the miserable can ever become blessed.[1] "Yes ; but there is

[1] Mr. Jukes, in his "Restitution of All Things" (p. 137, 4th ed.) evades the force of this expression, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed," in a way which appears to me not to meet the point at issue. He says ; "The great gulf fixed, which severs those who once were nigh but are now cast out, though utterly impassable

another hypothesis advanced against the eternity of punishment,—that of annihilation." True; but is there a trace of such a thing in this or any other passage of Scripture? Point us to the shadow of a suspicion of such a doom. It would have been consolatory to the rich man to know that, after however long a period of time, extinction would be his doom. But Abraham holds out no such hope. The upshot of Abraham's answer is, though a certain solemn, sorrowful affectionateness of tone breathes through it; "There is no comfort for you now. You have

for man, is not so for 'Him who hath the key of David . . . . who hath the keys of death and hell' and who, as He has Himself broken the bars of death for men, can yet 'say to the prisoner, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves.' Who are we to say that the gulf impassable to man cannot be passed by Christ, or that He cannot bring the lost prisoner safely back, even out of the lowest prison?" No one, I presume, would deny for an instant that Christ *could* pass the gulf, and deliver the tormented soul, if it so pleased Him. The question, however, is *not about the extent of His power, but about the meaning of His words.* It is simply a question whether His language in this place holds out, or whether it discourages, the hope of a deliverance at some future time from the torments which are reserved in another world as the penalty for selfish indifference to the miseries of others. And surely there can be no doubt on any mind as to the answer. The language seems so framed as to exclude such hope. "'Hiatus non solum est, verum

had all the comfort you ever are to have." Well; and what says our text? "These shall go away into *everlasting* punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Our translators have unjustifiably (and unfortunately, as it appears to me) rendered by two different English words that which in the Greek is

etiam *firmatus* est.' The gulf is not only there, but it is *fixed* there—an eternal separation—a yawning chasm, too deep to be filled up, too wide to be bridged over" (Archbishop Trench, quoting Augustine's "Epistles"). The gulf is not only impassable while it continues to exist, but irremovable also—that is, it will exist for ever.

As for the allegation by which it is often sought to weaken the testimony of the Parable to the doctrine of Eternal Punishment, that our Lord speaks of the rich man as being in *Hades* and not in *Gehenna* (which of course is perfectly true), and that, therefore, "this hell and torment cannot refer to the place and condition of the eternally damned" (Stier, quoted by Mr. Jukes, p. 138), is not this rather quibbling with the use of words? *Hades* means the invisible world, the realm into which death ushers us. By itself it means no more—determines nothing as to the happiness or misery of the persons passing into it. Doubtless it is only from his being said to be *in torments*, not from his being said to be in *Hades*, that we can infer anything respecting the rich man's experiences. The question is, whether the passage holds out hope of the future cessation of those torments, or otherwise? Our Lord's words would be exactly conveyed to our minds by; "And *in another world* he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." "Another world" will embrace the final as well as the intermediate state.

one and the same adjective. The life is eternal (or everlasting) on the one hand. And whatever the life is, that is the punishment; for it is expressed by the same word. You have precisely the same Scriptural ground for asserting that the life is not eternal as for asserting that the punishment is not eternal.[1] And

[1] This is the argument (assuredly none the worse for being a very old one) with which the teaching of Origen on the subject of the restoration of the wicked was met, as soon as it was broached.

In one of the many documents connected with the Fifth General Council, in which Origen's tenets were condemned, we read as follows: [Concilia Generalia et Provincialia, studio et industria Severini Binii, Coloniæ Agrippinæ, MDCXVIII. Tom. ii. pars ii. p. 144, A.B.C.]—"But as if the impiety respecting the pre-existence of souls and Origen's other vain babblings, and his blasphemies respecting the Holy Trinity, did not suffice for those who hold his opinions, this also they add to their own error, following in the steps of his perverse teaching, that the punishment of all ungodly men, and moreover of devils, has an end, and that ungodly men and devils shall be restored to their first estate (*ἀποκατασταθήσονται εἰς τὴν προτέραν αὐτῶν τάξιν*). And by saying these things they make men careless respecting the fulfilment of the commandments of God, turning them off from the narrow and strait way, and leading them astray into the broad and spacious one. And they are utterly opposed to the things said by our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. For He Himself teaches in His holy gospel that 'the ungodly shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life everlasting.' And again, He saith to those on the right hand, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom

what is the implication of those other words of Christ, —figurative though we admit them to be—"the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched?"[1]

prepared for you from the beginning of the world;' but to those on the left, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' Whereas the Lord, then, in his holy gospel evidently announceth both the punishment and kingdom to be endless, these men make it evident that they honour the fictions of Origen more than the sentences of the Lord. Wherein their folly is confuted by this among other considerations. For *if a man should, in accordance with their idle talk, suppose the punishment of the ungodly to have an end, it is necessary that such an one should assign an end also to the eternal life, which is promised to the righteous. For equally of both is eternity predicated.* And if both punishment and bliss are to have an end, for what purpose was the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for what purpose the Lord's Crucifixion, and Death, and Burial, and Resurrection. And what advantageth it those who have fought the good fight, and have been martyrs for Christ, if devils and ungodly men shall receive the same place with the Saints through the restitution [of all things] (διὰ τῆς ἀποκαταστάσεως)? But may these fables turn again upon the heads of those who invent them; for the words of Christ remain unshaken, both in the minds of the faithful and in the very truth of things."

Mr. Jukes's answer to this obvious (and since oft-repeated) argument is as follows:—"If it can be shown (as we have shown) that the word here used is in other Scriptures applied to what is not eternal, we may be pardoned for thinking that it cannot

[1] See St. Mark, ix. 44, 46, 48.

Our Lord is here quoting from the last solemn words which the Evangelical Prophet ("so copious," usually, "in merciful revelations and comforting assurances

mean eternal here. . . . . Nor, as I have said, does this affect the true eternity of bliss of the redeemed, which is based on participation with Christ in His risen life, and is distinctly affirmed in other plain Scriptures." In several Scriptures, however, the word *αἰώνιος* can mean nothing but everlasting (as in "The things which are seen are *temporal*, but the things which are not seen are *eternal*," 2 Cor. iv. 18; "an house not made with hands, *eternal* in the heavens," said of the resurrection body, 2 Cor. v. 1; "God who hath called us unto His *eternal* glory," 1 Pet. v. 10; "the commandment of the *everlasting* God," Rom. xvi. 26; "who through the *eternal* Spirit offered Himself," Heb. ix. 14; "as many as were ordained to *eternal* life believed," Acts xiii. 48; "that when ye fail, they may receive you into *everlasting* habitations," St. Luke xvi. 9). The meaning of words which are used in different senses is often determined by the connexion in which they occur; and when the word *αἰώνιος* is used of the future recompence of the righteous, who can believe that it means anything but "that which is to last for ever"? Mr. Jukes is for basing "the eternity of bliss of the redeemed" on other passages of Scripture, and on the fact of the participation of the believer in Christ's risen life. And doubtless the doctrine of the eternal blessedness of the redeemed could afford to dispense with the support lent it by the word *αἰώνιος*. But does Mr. Jukes mean to say that, where this word is predicated of this blessedness, we are to understand merely "life continuing through the successive ages or dispensations"? Surely no one, *εἰ μὴ θέσιν διαφυλάττων*, could adopt such a meaning of the word in that connexion. In a very masterly

of God's love in Christ") has left upon record. But the words, as they stand in Isaiah, are even more

paper by the late lamented Rev. J. Riddell, which is subjoined to Dr. Pusey's great Sermon on Everlasting Punishment (Parker, 1864), the writer shows conclusively that in the classical authors "αἰὼν had very early the sense of unlimited duration, and further, that, in proportion, as in the hands of the philosophers, this conception was more and more consciously dwelt upon, αἰὼν had this sense more and more precisely fixed upon it." And as to Scriptural usage, that αἰὼν is very often used (as Mr. Jukes insists) of limited periods, ages, or dispensations, during which God is carrying into effect some great purpose, there can be no question. But it is equally undeniable that in other passages the connexion in which the word stands shuts us up to the meaning of eternal duration. Thus, in the doxology of the Lord's Prayer (the first place of the New Testament in which the word occurs), what *can* the εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας mean, but (as our translators render it) "for ever"? or what εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, in the ascription, "unto God and our Father be glory" (Phil. iv. 20), or the same expression as added to the words, "God, who liveth" (Rev. xv. 7), but "for ever and ever"? I see not how to escape the conclusion that in St. Matt. xxv. 46, the "life," into which the righteous are represented as going away must be never-ending; and if so, the punishment of the wicked must be never-ending also, both being characterized by the same word.

If it be desired to know in what sense *very early* writers, bordering on the age of the Apostles, understood the word αἰώνιος, an answer may be gathered from the following passage of the Encyclical Letter of the Church of Smyrna on the Martyrdom of St. Polycarp. The writer is speaking of the constancy with which the martyrs endured bodily tortures by Christ's presence and

emphatic than as Christ cites them, because they are in the direct sentence, "For their worm shall not

support:—"And fastening their mind's eye (προσέχοντες) on the grace of Christ, they despised worldly tortures, *through one hour* [of such tortures] purchasing an exemption from the everlasting punishment (διὰ μιᾶς ὥρας τὴν αἰώνιον κόλασιν ἐξαγοραζόμενοι); and the fire inflicted upon them by their cruel torturers was to them cool; for they held before their eyes the escaping from the fire everlasting, and which is never quenched" (πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν γὰρ εἶχον φυγεῖν τὸ αἰώνιον καὶ μηδέποτε σβεννύμενον πῦρ).

Canon Bright has called my attention to the observable fact that in a recent pamphlet, coming from one of the advocates of Conditional Immortality, the words αἰώνιος and κόλασις in St. Matt. xxv. 46, are both interpreted in the sense put upon them by the received doctrine. ["Divine Veracity and Divine Justice" (Kegan Paul, 1880), pp. 22, 23, note 1.] Thus Universalists and Annihilationists cancel one another's arguments.

As to the word κόλασις, which originally denotes (as Archbishop Trench points out in his "New Testament Synonyms") "punishment as it has reference to the correction and bettering of him that endures it," Mr. Jukes is hardly fair in omitting what the Archbishop says about it at the end of the article; "The κόλασις αἰώνιος of Matt. xxv. 46, as it plainly itself declares, is no corrective and therefore temporary discipline; it can be no other than the ἀθάνατος τιμωρία (Josephus, *B.J.* ii. 8, 11) with which the Lord elsewhere threatens finally impenitent men (Mark ix. 43-48); *for in proof that* κόλασις *had acquired in Hellenistic Greek this severer sense, and was used simply as punishment or torment, with no necessary underthought of the bettering through it of him who endured it,* we have only to refer to such passages as the following:—Josephus, *Ant.* xv. 2, 3; Philo, *De Agricul.* 9; 2 Macc. iv. 38; *Wisdom*, xix. 4."

die, neither shall their fire be quenched." If the punishment indicated by this figurative expression be not to endure for ever, why not simply describe it as the worm and the fire ; why add the phrases "that dieth not," "that is not quenched"?[1] It

It may be added that, even if κόλασις *did* always retain in Hellenistic Greek its strict original sense, its being coupled with αἰώνιος (which must in that position mean never-ending), would forbid our supposing it to be employed in strictness of speech. The figure would be an Oxymoron, like λίθοι ζῶντες (1 Pet. ii. 5), "stones, but unlike stones in this, that ye are alive ;" "chastisement, but unlike ordinary chastisement in this, that it shall know no end."

It may be observed also that the punishment of those who "tread under foot the Son of God, and do despite to the Spirit of grace," is denominated in Heb. x. 29 τιμωρία ("punishment as satisfying the inflicter's sense of outraged justice, as defending his own honour, or that of the violated law," Archbishop Trench). This would seem to show, what indeed the Archbishop intimates, that in the Greek of the New Testament the two words approach very nearly to the meaning of one another, so as to be capable of being used promiscuously.

[1] It should be observed that what St. Mark expresses by "that is not quenched," "that dieth not," St. Matthew expresses by the single word αἰώνιος (τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον) chap. xviii. 8. It is as if a succeeding Evangelist (writing by the same Spirit who inspired the preceding) had explained for us the word αἰώνιος, as applied to the punishment of wicked, and asserted that it *does* signify, in that application of it, never-ending. Or rather as if our blessed Saviour, afraid of being mistaken if He should use only the word αἰώνιος,

may add something to the force of this argument to remark that in one of the Apocryphal books, hell is designated simply as "fire and worms" ("The vengeance of the ungodly is fire and worms"[1]), as if that were the ordinary and current phraseology to

had brought out the meaning unmistakably, by reverting to the phraseology of the Prophet Isaiah, and calling hell a "fire which never shall be quenched." I subjoin Canon Cook's Exposition in the "Speaker's Commentary" of the words, "where their worm dieth not." "Literally 'endeth not;' a fearful commentary on 'eternal' (*αἰώνιος*), making it equivalent to unending (*ἀτελεύτητος*). The 'worm' represents the subjective anguish of remorse, unending so long as memory remains, and is burdened with the consciousness of unpardonable sin. The fire is the action of Divine wrath: in fact, the presence of God revealed, a 'consuming fire' to the lost."

Mr. Jukes's method of evading the difficulty which these words present to his theory of the restoration of the wicked is, *as far as I understand it*, by saying that several fires spoken of in Scripture as unquenchable (the literal fire upon the altar of burnt offering, the fire of God's wrath against Jerusalem, Edom, etc., and particularly the fire which devoured the carcasses in the literal Gehenna, or Valley of Hinnom) *did go out eventually*. Of course there is more or less of figure in the diction, and no literal fire ever actually burned, nor did any literal worm devour, eternally. But the question is, What is implied by the figure and meant to be understood by it? In so very solemn a warning, repeated three times in the same words, we cannot, it appears to me, with any approach to reverence, suppose our Lord to be using a flourish of rhetoric.

[1] Ecclus. vii. 17.

denote hell, drawn from the carcases, and the manner of their consumption, in the literal valley of Gehenna. The inspired Prophet Isaiah, and our Lord echoing him, seem to have intensified the ordinary phraseology, by throwing into it the idea of eternity.

Thus then speaks the revelation of God's *Word.* And do His *Works,* which we fully admit to be another subordinate revelation of the Divine character, speak in tones less alarming and more consolatory? Look at nature. What indications does nature give of the character of her Creator? The indications are

What stronger or clearer language could He have used, if He had designed to impress upon us the permanence of the punishment of the wicked, and to discourage in the most emphatic manner all hope of eventual deliverance?

A learned friend writes to me very pertinently on the method in which Annihilationists seek to evade the force of the words, "The fire that never shall be quenched:"—"I observe that 'Annihilationists' dwell on γέενναν in St. Mark ix. 43, as corresponding to the fires of Hinnom, which were to consume and to *annihilate,* and understand ἄσβεστον as = 'not quenched *until it has done its consuming work.*' Yet is not the phrase relating to unquenched fire in the basis-passage (Isa. lxvi. 24) necessarily more absolute in its scope than would be appropriate to the destruction of carcasses? One would not naturally say of bodies submitted to cremation, 'Their fire will not be quenched.' The words point on to what is symbolized."

twofold. On the one hand, we find indications everywhere of an universal benevolence. The enjoyment of every sentient creature is abundantly consulted for. Paley has pointed out, in his usual masterly manner, that, although evil exists in nature, it is never the object of contrivance. The impression of the Divine character which we gather from nature is that of one who never designedly produces pain. And this benevolence, to which the works of God everywhere testify, is the counterpart of God's love in the higher revelation of His word. But the works give indications of another side of the Divine character. Nature is very stern and grim in punishing those, who come into collision with her laws. She knows no mercy for such persons. You are girdled in on every side by the laws and forces of what is called nature. Oppose them, and they will crush you instantly. Breathe an infected atmosphere for a few seconds, and disease fastens its fangs upon you and makes you its prey. Throw yourself from the pinnacle of the temple, and you are dashed to pieces. Endeavour to force a way down the burning staircase of a house on fire, and you are suffocated or burned to death.

Endeavour to live in the water, and you are infallibly drowned. You are drowned; and nature takes no notice of those shrieks which you utter in your extremity, save that perhaps she returns them upon your ear with the hollow mockery of an echo. Calm and stern, imperturbable and unruffled, she holds on her course. The sun glances out upon the waters which have just witnessed your last death-wrestle, and the summer insects dance in its golden gleam, as gaily as if there were no such thing as death; and the river which has closed over your head glides on majestically, just as it has glided for the last century, as if the making shipwreck of a man's life were accounted nothing by the great forces of nature. My brethren, nature is only a word invented by ourselves, under which we attempt to screen from our own eyes the awful personality of God. It is God who acts everywhere in nature, whose hidden hand lavishes these enjoyments, and smites also with these stern penalties. And if the works of God reveal to us a stern and relentless side of the Divine character, have we not here the counterpart of the revelation, which the *Word* makes to us, of all the miseries consequent

upon sin, and of eternal perdition as closing the catalogue of those miseries? The infinite God is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;"[1] and if abundant sin and sorrow in time be certainly not inconsistent with His love of His creatures, we see not why it should be so throughout eternity.

And now, to bring the argument to a head. If you cannot trust mere speculations on the character of the Almighty, and cannot safely drop the clue supplied by fact and by Revelation, to what conclusion does that clue direct you? Let candour and reason answer. But as, on the one hand, it is not safe to shut our eyes to any revealed aspect of the Divine character; so, on the other, it is not possible for us to overrate or to overstate, though we may misrepresent, the love of God. Leave alone the *reconciliation* of the Divine attributes (a task which transcends our reason), and take to yourself the full warning of one aspect, the full solace and encouragement of the other. God designs us to do so, when He sends us the precious message of the Atonement.

[1] See Heb. xiii. 8.

The Atonement is the grand specimen of God's dealings with us, in which He sets forth, with one masterly stroke, all the yearning tenderness of His love, side by side with all the righteous severity of His anger. There is blood and suffering enough in it,—more than enough to make one sick at heart,—suffering mysterious, unutterable, and inconceivable, and in these characteristics of it resembling, we doubt not, the eternal penalty reserved for the sinner's hereafter. It is perplexing suffering too (even as that penalty is to unassisted reason and natural feeling perplexing); for why should the Innocent suffer? why should the Son of God's Love be doomed to feel as if God had hidden His face from Him? But amidst all this intense and perplexing suffering, which utterly confounds the reason, and makes the faculties of man stand aghast, there shine forth love and compassion, which stretch into the depths of the infinite, and which ought to make even the heart of stone beat with a responsive echo. God gives His all, sinner, rather than that thou shouldest perish. He tears His own Son from His bosom, and throws Him into the pit of thy ruin, to be one with thee in

thy nature and in thy sufferings, and to lift thee out of thy sins. Wilt thou be lifted out? Then by faith, by prayer, by holy effort, stretch forth thy hand to this Deliverer. And His arm shall encircle thee, as it encircled Peter on the water, and thou shalt be set on a rock, and be made a sharer in His triumph, when

> "The Lord of love, the Lord of might,
> The King of all created,
> Shall back return to claim His right,
> On clouds of glory seated,
> With trumpet-blast and angel song,
> And Hallelujahs loud and long,
> O'er death and hell defeated."

Sermon IV.

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT

NOT INCONSISTENT WITH GOD'S PURPOSE IN CREATION.

From all evil and mischief; from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil; from thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation,

GOOD LORD, DELIVER US.

Sermon IV.

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT NOT INCONSISTENT WITH GOD'S PURPOSE IN CREATION.[1]

"The Lord hath made all *things* for Himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."—Prov. xvi. 4.

In endeavouring to answer the objections which have been brought against the doctrine of Eternal Punishment, I have not rested the burden of the argument upon the Scriptural texts which seem to affirm the doctrine. And this because, as I observed in my first Sermon, it is not from Scripture that the objections are really drawn, but from the reasonings and speculations of the human mind, which those

[1] Several of the thoughts of this Sermon, though thrown into their present form by my own mind, are borrowed from a very able Article in "The Princeton Review" (January Number of the Fifty-Fourth Year) by Mr. (Rev.?) Francis L. Patton. The Article is entitled "Divine Retribution."

who indulge in them endeavour to force into an agreement with Scripture as best they may. One of these speculations is that, as Eternal Punishment seems to be a disproportionate recompence for offences committed in time, we cannot suppose that a just God will inflict it. Another is, that the permission on the part of God of eternal suffering would be inconsistent with love, which is the leading attribute of His character. Both of these objections have received a full consideration in previous discourses. I now come to one which seems to be more fundamental still, and one which, I think, admits of the most satisfactory answer of all.

What shall we suppose to be the end which God had in view in creating the universe? God, as being the highest Reason, the Intelligence of intelligences, must have had some design moving Him to create ; what shall we say that the design was? The answer given to this question will rule a man's acceptance or rejection of Eternal Punishment ; and therefore with this profound question we cannot avoid dealing, if we would arrive at a correct conclusion on the subject before us.

What, then, moved God to create the universe?

We must suppose it to have been perfectly open to Him either to call into existence only creatures of a particular order, or not to call into existence any creatures at all. The Three Persons of the Holy Trinity might have remained for ever in a blessedness, which might have been called solitary, had it not been for the interchanges of profound sympathy and love between themselves; without a single created intelligence—angel or man—to adore them; without a star, or a flower, or a sunset, or a landscape, to mirror dimly in things material the beauty of the Infinite Mind. What, then, was it which moved the Triune God to manifest Himself in the creatures of His hand? It would be highly presumptuous to give any answer to this question, except so far as facts or Revelation lead us by the hand; but where they do lead us, we may walk safely and without fear of stumbling.

Shall we then give this account of the matter, which seems at first sight a rational and reverent one, that God is a Being of infinite benevolence; that such a Being must, by the necessity of His nature, long to surround Himself with happy and

rejoicing creatures, must experience a certain restlessness until He can diffuse to others the happiness which finds place in His own breast; that, therefore, God called creatures into existence merely as a sphere for His benevolence, and that the happiness of these creatures was the main end of the creation—the end in which God acquiesces, and beyond which He has no other? You will at once perceive, I think, that if a man gives this account to himself of God's design in creation, he cannot possibly accept the doctrine of Eternal Punishment, but, supposing him to be a believer in the Bible, must attempt to explain in some other way the texts which seem to assert the doctrine. God's design, whatever opposition may be offered to it by the perverse will of sinners, must eventually be carried into effect; His counsel must eventually stand, and His pleasure eventually be done. If, therefore, the happiness of the creatures be the end of ends, beyond which He has no other, and to which all His other ends are subordinate and ancillary, it is impossible to believe that any creatures will be permitted to suffer everlastingly; we are driven to suppose either that, after

the infliction of a certain amount of punishment, impenitent sinners will be restored and brought back to God's favour, or that He will, in the exercise of His divine power, annihilate them, and so cause their sufferings to cease. This view imperatively demands that, in the furthest point of sight to which the mind's eye can reach, there shall be none but rejoicing and happy creatures around the throne of God.

Will this account of the matter, then, that God called creatures into existence with the sole object of making them happy, stand the test of facts and of Revelation? I answer unhesitatingly, "No."

First; this view breaks down as a theory, because it does not account for the whole of the facts. It offers no explanation of the reasons which moved the Creator to create irrational and inanimate creatures. I can understand that God created angels and men with the ultimate view of making them happy, and animals also with the view of giving them that enjoyment of life and health, which animals are capable of experiencing. But trees, and stars, and hills, and flowers, cannot be made happy; the capacity of enjoyment is not in them; and yet they are

a part of God's universe as much as angels, and men, and animals. Why should God have created *them?* If you say, "To minister to His rational creatures; to give them nourishment, or enjoyment, or resources of one sort or another," then I observe that the provision made is greatly in excess of that which is needed, and that a vast quantity of it seems to be thrown away, if the only end contemplated in it was the good or the pleasure of man. Why should God annually produce such an abundance of beautiful flowers, which are "born to blush unseen, and waste their sweetness on the desert air?" Why should He have created so many glorious landscapes in remote districts of the earth, which human eye never has, and perhaps never will, gaze upon? It is often and truly said that there is no waste in creation, but, on the contrary, an utilising even of refuse, and a general observance of the principle, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."[1] But if we suppose the inanimate works of God to have been brought into existence simply for the use or instruction (in some way or other) of His rational

[1] St. John vi. 12.

creatures, there would seem to be everywhere a vast and reckless profusion, far in excess of what is needed.

Secondly; if the ultimate and highest end which God had in creating was to produce happiness in creatures capable of it, it is simply impossible to say why so much suffering should be allowed to exist, why the world should be so brimful of moaning and tears as it is. If we suppose God to have had some other object, distinct from, and beyond that of the happiness of His creatures, such, for example, as the manifestation of that awful justice, purity, and holiness, which, no less than love, is a part of His character, then a gleam of light, at all events, if not so full and clear as we could wish, is thrown on the great mystery of suffering; it is open to us to think that suffering in a fallen world is just a vestige of one of God's perfections, which He would not have His rational creatures drop out of sight. But if, on the other hand, we take the enjoyment of the creatures as being the end of ends, then the admission into, and permission in, the universe of so much which is destructive of enjoyment seems a perfectly insoluble enigma. The allowed intrusion of evil

into the universe is a subject full of difficulty anyhow; but this theory of the happiness of the creatures being God's chief end in bringing them into existence drops the only clue we seem to have for guiding us out of the difficulty.

Thirdly; this account of God's end in creating cannot be accepted, because it lays down a wrong basis of morality. The end which God had in creating man ought to be, of course, man's end for himself. If God studies our happiness supremely, we ought to do the same. But ought the seeking of our own happiness to be the leading principle of human action? I do not say that it is possible for us to leave out of calculation, or that God would have us leave out of calculation, the thought of the eternal recompence which is to attend upon piety and virtue. That thought is designed to be a stimulant, and is used in Holy Scripture as a stimulant; our Lord Himself, the only pure partaker of our nature, was supported in His enterprise of working out our redemption by "the joy that was set before Him."[1] But the buttress of a building, which props it from without, is not its

[1] See Heb. xii. 2.

foundation which supports it from beneath; the stimulant to virtue is not its prompting principle. Though by living to God men will certainly secure their own highest happiness, they are never bidden to live for that happiness; which would be, indeed, living to themselves. Living to self, and even to the best interests of self, is in direct contrariety to the first principle of Christian morality, which is unreserved devotion to the Author of our redemption—"He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again."[1] "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice" (self-devotion to God is to be the leading aim, not the quest of happiness), "holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."[2] Nor would a man, who should seek his own happiness first and before all things else, succeed in finding it. Happiness is not to be reached by directly grasping at it. It springs up in the heart, when the moral faculties are in healthy exercise; but he who makes it his chief end will

[1] 2 Cor. v. 15. [2] Rom. xii. 1.

miss it. Live for others. Live for God. Live the unselfish life; and then you will be happy, because you will be morally and spiritually healthy. Aristotle somewhere says that pleasure would elude the grasp of persons who should consciously and deliberately make it their end; that it can only spring from some propensity of our nature meeting with its suitable gratification. Much the same might be said of happiness. God created man's heart to find rest and satisfaction nowhere but in communion with Himself. Live to Him then, and you shall find rest and satisfaction (that is, happiness) in so doing, while you propose to yourself God only as your end of ends.

We have seen that the facts around us will not bear out the notion that the ultimate end which God had in view in creation was the production of happiness among the creatures. And assuredly still less will Revelation bear it out. Unequivocally does the wise man in my text assert that "the Lord hath made all things for himself," that is, for the manifestation of His own glorious attributes. And no sooner has he made this statement as to God's design

in creating, than it seems to suggest itself to him that there is much evil in God's universe, or at least in that portion of it with which we are best acquainted, "sorrow and sighing," "wailing and gnashing of teeth," every form of misery, physical and mental. So he stops to ask himself the question, whether, of these dark phenomena also, which not without God's permission have found a lodgment in His universe, it can be said that "the Lord made them for Himself"? And his answer seems to be that God *does* glorify Himself, does manifest the perfections of His nature, by the pains and penalties which follow in the train of wickedness. He did not, indeed, make or introduce the wickedness; it was introduced by the corrupt will of man, yielding itself up to the instigations of the devil. But being introduced, God manifested His character and glory upon it by requiting it with suffering and calamity. For, be it observed that God's holiness and justice are parts of His character, as essential to His being what He is, as His mercy and love. "God is light," says St. John; and in light there are dark rays—indigo, blue, and violet—which, equally with the bright ones, are

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constituents of the light, and render it that exquisitely delicate and beautiful and enjoyable a thing which it is. Even so the Divine character has its sterner and more sombre, as well as its brighter and more attractive, attributes. The Bible is full, from beginning to end, of the manifestation of these sterner attributes side by side with the more attractive; and the Saviour's agony and bloody sweat, His cross and passion, are the climax of the manifestation of both classes of attributes. So urgent was the necessity for God's manifesting His justice and righteous wrath against sin, that it was impossible for man to be redeemed without the submission of the Redeemer to an anguish inconceivable and unutterable by man, an anguish in which, spotless as He was, the light of God's countenance and favour seemed to be obscured, and He cried out in the midst of His anguish that He was not only bereft of human sympathy, but that His God had forsaken Him.[1] In the light of this astounding fact, which is plainly stated in Holy Scripture, and which every believer in the narratives of the Evangelists *must* accept, it seems to me that

[1] See St. Matt. xxvii. 46; St. Mark xv. 34.

the doctrine of Eternal Punishment, which the same Scriptures appear to inculcate, loses nearly all its difficulty. If the necessity for God's manifesting His justice upon the Son of His own Love, the sharer of His own throne, who lay from all eternity in His bosom, was so urgent and imperative that man could not have been redeemed at a lower price, I see nothing so very startling in the idea that throughout the ages of eternity the wilfully impenitent and unbelieving may be made monuments to the whole universe of intelligent beings of the awfulness of sin. More especially as this dreadful doom is, by the Saviour's own declaration, reserved for those who, having had the offer of His gospel made to them, have deliberately rejected it—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not"—he that believeth not, that is, after having the good news fairly laid before him—he that accepts not the blood-bought pardon which the gospel proffers (faith is nothing else than the acceptance of Christ), but slinks back again into his natural darkness, loving it rather than the light—he, and

he only, as far as appears from these words, "shall be damned."[1] Can it be wondered at that, when God proposes to us a salvation, upon which all the resources of His wisdom, love, and power have been lavished, he who deliberately rejects it should be made to bear the consequences of his refusal throughout eternity?

But perhaps the account which the Scriptures give of God's end in the creation of the universe (I say which the Scriptures give, because it is not only my text, but the whole Bible, which harps continually on God's glory as the ultimate end of all His actions,)[2]

[1] If it be asked how the proposal of salvation on the single condition of faith (avowing itself in Baptism) is reconcileable with its being apparently made to rest on works of love in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (St. Matt. xxv. 34, 35, 36), and, again, on cutting off the hand and foot, and plucking out the eye, at the end of the ninth chapter of St. Mark (vv. 43, 45, 47), the answer is, that the faith which saves is a living faith, such as "worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6), and "overcometh the world" (1 John v. 4). We are saved, it is true, by faith alone, that is, by a simple hearty acceptance of the Saviour; but we shall be judged according to the works of love and self-sacrifice which that faith, where it has had room for them, has brought forth (see Rev. xx. 12); in other words, the great question to be decided at the judgment will be *the genuineness of our faith.*

[2] See particularly Ezekiel xx. 9, 14, 22, and xxxvi. 21, 22; Psalm cvi. 7, 8, etc.

does not satisfy you, because it does not come up to your notions of the Divine character. When it is said that God does all things for Himself, and with a view to His own glory, this seems to you to be a selfish and unworthy end. Who would tolerate a man, you exclaim, who made self his centre and great principle of action? what can be said of a man, who seeks his own glory, but that he is a vain man? and a vain man is more or less an offensive character. Let me briefly notice these objections before I conclude; for surely nothing is of greater importance in our spiritual life than that our conception of God's character and dealings should be clear of all alloy. "Who would tolerate a man, who should make self his centre and great principle of action?" Granted, *a man.* For a man to make self his centre would violate the first principle of revealed morality, which is, as already mentioned, that we should live, not to ourselves, but to God. But surely it does not follow that because *the creature* may not find its centre in itself, therefore *the great Creator,* who has an independent and underived existence, may not and must not do so. The end, which man

proposes to himself, should be that which God proposed when He created man. Now there can be no question in the mind of any one who accepts the Scriptures, that the end, which we are directed to propose to ourselves, is God's glory; "Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."[1] This, therefore, must be the end which God proposed to Himself when He created us—His own glory. And so He says, by the mouth of Isaiah, of every one that is called by His name; "I have created him for my glory."[2] The fountain of all wisdom, strength, and goodness (as God is, but as no creature can possibly be) cannot have any other end than the manifestation of these perfections in all that He does.

But again you ask; "What can be said of a man who seeks his own glory in all things, but that he is a vain man?" Most assuredly we must beware how we impute to the blessed God the sinful infirmities of His creatures. But when it is said that God seeks His own glory, that He created all things for Himself, and so forth, what is meant is, *not that He seeks*

[1] 1 Cor. x. 31. [2] Isaiah xliii. 7.

applause in what He does, as a man who has one or two gifts seeks to be admired for the exercise of them (how could the infinitely excellent One seek the applause of His poor dependent creatures?), but that *by some internal necessity of His nature He is driven to manifest the exuberant power, wisdom, and love which have resided in Him from all eternity;* and that, quite apart from any contemplation of His works by created intelligences, He finds a delight in this self-manifestation, — "The Lord shall rejoice in His works."[1] May we not trace in man, who was made in God's image, some dim analogy to this rejoicing in His works, which may help us here? A great painter is in a lower sense a creator: so also is a great poet, or a great musician. Now when the idea of a great picture (like Michael Angelo's "Last Judgment") is conceived in the mind of a painter of genius, does he not find a pure and exalted pleasure in throwing it upon the canvas? Does not the realisation of the idea, as it begins to dawn upon the frame before him, give him joy, and this quite apart from any thought of the admiration which, when exhibited, the picture is likely

[1] Psalm civ. 31.

to excite? Genius delights in putting itself forth, without any thought whether men will commend it. If a man has a beautiful or a sublime idea in his mind, he hastens to give it expression for its own sake; he feels it is worth expressing. And, since man was made in the image of God, may we not reasonably suppose that there was in the Creator's mind some deep necessity, which urged Him to exhibit in Creation those forms of natural beauty which existed in His infinite intelligence, the colours of the flowers and of the sunsets, the song of song-birds, the glory and majesty of the firmament? Yes; "the heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handywork."[1] And it was in order to express His wisdom, and magnificence, and power, that the heavens and the firmament were constructed, and everything which is was called into existence. Man created in God's image, with a conscience susceptible of Divine direction, a reason capable of reflecting the Divine light, a heart capable of acquiescing in nothing short of communion with God,—man was God's masterpiece, whose creation glorified Him more

[1] Psalm xix. 1.

signally than any of His other works. And when man fell, and, as far as his own resources went, was hopelessly ruined, God addressed Himself to the recovery of this shattered masterpiece by an exhibition of mingled mercy, justice, and power, so extraordinary as to throw into the shade all previous manifestations of those attributes. Thenceforth the great Artificer finds His greatest and sublimest joy in carrying into effect the provisions already made for man's redemption; in taking back the penitent believer into communion with Himself, and enabling him to walk in the light, as God is in the light. But what if, though light is come into the world, men love darkness rather than light, still flit about like bats in the dreary shades of sin, or like moles, burrowing in the soil, bury themselves away from the light in the things of time and sense? They must still fulfil in a measure the end of their creation. God must be glorified in and upon them still; His justice must be glorified upon them, where His love has failed to win and reclaim. And shall there then be shadows, dark shadows, shadows dark as the bottomless pit, yea, and abiding shadows, in God's great picture of

the universe? Shall not a time come when, either by the restoration or the annihilation of the impenitent, the great picture shall exhibit nothing but light? One would gladly think so, if God's Word permitted it. But fairly interpreted, does it give such permission? I cannot see it. When the Apocalyptic seer winds up the great drama of man's history by pourtraying the remotest future of our race, he recognises indeed that all tears shall be wiped from the eyes of the citizens of the heavenly city, and that among them "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain;" but, in depicting the doom of the rest, he does not throw into the picture one single gleam of light or hope, but leaves it enveloped in the blackness of darkness for ever. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."[1] There shall be a memento to all eternity that "our God is a consuming

[1] Rev. xxi. 4, 8.

fire;"[1] and so far as we can gather from the last verses of Isaiah, where the vast army of Sennacherib, consigned to the fires and worms of the valley of Hinnom, and made a spectacle to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,[2] supplies the basis of the figure, the memento shall have a purpose towards the saved, thrilling their hearts probably with reverence and godly fear, and with loving gratitude also to Him, whose grace has snatched them as brands out of the burning.[3]

[1] Heb. xii. 29; Deut. iv. 24. [2] Isa. lxvi. 22-24.

[3] See Zech. iii. 2, and Amos iv. 11.—I must not pass over, without a brief notice, those passages of Holy Scripture to which some appeal as favouring the idea of an ultimate restoration of the wicked to God's favour. Of these, the chief is that which furnishes the devout and learned Mr. Jukes with the title of his thoughtful and able work, "The Restitution of all Things" (Acts iii. 21). It is probable that Origen very much rested his doctrine on this text; for in glancing over Justinian's Tractate, addressed to the Patriarch Menas against the errors of Origen, my eye catches in two consecutive columns the words *ἀποκαταστασθήσονται*, *τῆς ἀποκαταστάσεως*, and *ἀποκατάστασιν*, as descriptive of Origen's views respecting the restoration of devils and wicked men.* Now a student who seeks to elicit the meaning of a Scriptural phrase by consulting the different places in which

* See "Concilia Generalia et Provincialia, studio S. Binii [Colon. Agrippin. MDCXVIII]. Tom. ii. p. 144, A and C, and p. 145, E.

Awful as our general subject is, that branch of it which has occupied us to-day offers a thought which is precious and consolatory, as well as edifying; and with it I conclude. If God's glory be His end in all things, that glory is far more conspicuously manifested

it occurs, will hardly be disposed to give so much latitude of meaning to St Peter's words (in Acts iii. 21), "the times of the restitution of all things," when he finds that Elias is spoken of by our Lord as restoring all things (St. Matt. xvii. 11; St. Mark ix. 12), and that the foundation of this phraseology is the Septuagint version of Malachi iv. 5, 6, *ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστελῶ ὑμῖν Ἠλίαν τὸν Θεσβίτην, πρὶν ἐλθεῖν τὴν ἡμέραν Κυρίου τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ἐπιφανῆ, ὃς ἀποκαταστήσει καρδιὰν πατρὸς πρὸς υἱὸν, καὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου πρὸς τὸν πλήσιον αὐτοῦ μὴ ἔλθω καὶ πατάξω τὴν γῆν ἄρδην* ("Behold, I will send you Elijah the Tishbite, before that great and notable day of the Lord cometh, who shall *restore* the heart of the son to the father, and the heart of a man to his neighbour, lest I come and utterly smite the earth"). If the predicted "restitution" is a work, done in part before Messiah's first advent by St. John the Baptist, and in part also by the literal Elijah before His second, this seems to give a complexion to the words entirely different from that which the maintainers of Origen's doctrine put upon them. Moreover, the "restitution" spoken of by St. Peter seems to be an event, which (in its fulness and completion) is to take place at the time of the Second Advent; ("that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of the restitution of all things"). "The same period is intended by *the times of the restitution* and *the seasons of refreshing;*

in the salvation than in the condemnation of a sinner. For in the sinner's condemnation only His sterner attributes, His justice and holiness, are glorified; whereas in a sinner's salvation these, no less than the milder attributes of mercy and love, receive their

but in the latter phrase that epoch is viewed as it affects mankind, refreshing and reviving them; in the former, as it fulfils prophecy." (Humphry, "Commentary on the Acts," [London: 1854] *in loc*). "The restitution of all things," which is at present in progress through the various spiritual agencies of the kingdom of God, will not be completed till the period predicted in Rev. xxi. 5, when "he that is on the throne saith, Behold, I make all things new." Let it be observed that it is *after* this renovation of all things, and also *after* the abolition (for the saved) of death, sorrow, crying, and pain (Rev. xxi. 4), that the wicked are exhibited to us in "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (Rev. xxi. 8). Thus, it appears that to make the phrase "the restitution of all things" bear the meaning of a restoration of wicked men and evil angels to God's favour, is to put an unnatural strain on it which it resists. And the same unnatural tension is put upon the word "all" in other texts, which are quoted as appearing to favour the restoration of the wicked. St. Paul says, "Therefore, as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life."[1] It is inferred hence that, as all men are under sentence of death in consequence of Adam's sin, so all men will eventually be justified by the righteousness of Christ. And

[1] Rom. v. 18.

manifestation. For the sinner is saved only by the Atonement of Christ, with which he must identify himself by faith. And God's strict justice, and holy hatred of sin, and determination to punish it, are nowhere so conspicuously exhibited as in that Atone-

doubtless *in God's intention and design*, all are involved in the merits of Christ, as all are in the demerit of Adam; the blood and righteousness of the Redeemer are offered co-extensively with the effects of the Fall; nay more, there is in them (seeing that they have all the infinite preciousness, which Christ's Deity throws into them, whereas even the aggregate sins of the entire race are finite) *much more than enough merit to save every soul which ever existed*, a superabundance of ransom and atoning virtue, in excess of the need. But, if an agent endowed with free will is to benefit by a gift, he must *receive* it; and there are many who, loving darkness rather than light, do *not* receive the free gift of Christ's salvation. Therefore, in immediate juxtaposition with the passage cited, the Apostle says; "If by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more THEY WHICH RECEIVE abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Aye, THEY WHICH RECEIVE! But it is open to man, in the exercise of his free will, *not* to receive, but to refuse. And what of those who refuse, reject,—who will not have the boon on the terms on which it is offered to them? God's offers of grace are not restricted, nor Christ's merit limited in its efficacy; but men may decline acceptance of them.

The same may be said of the other passages cited by Mr. Jukes in pages 22-25 of his work. [4th Edn. 1875.] In some of these passages the word "all" must not be pressed to mean every member

ment, which sets forth even more strikingly His mind of grace and love to the sinner. With what holy confidence then, with what assurance of being heard,

of the human family, that not being the point of the assertion. When our Lord says, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me,"[1] it is in connexion with the power of His Cross that He says this. He had said just before (ver. 31); "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." Between this and what immediately follows Chrysostom, with his usual delicate appreciation of Scriptural sequences of thought, traces the connexion thus (Hom. lxvii. 2); "But that none may say, 'How will the devil be cast out, if he overcome thee?' He adds, *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* How can He be overcome, who draws others unto Him?" The point of the sentence, therefore, is simply the attractive and victorious power of the Cross; it draws all men, *i.e.*, every one in every part of the world who is drawn. Similarly, when it is said (in 1 Cor. xv. 28) that at the resignation of the mediatorial kingdom "God shall be all in all," the point of the passage evidently lies in the word "God;" the Apostle would say that, when the kingdom has passed into the Father's hands, so that He administers it immediately and directly in His own person, the Mediator's person will be no longer interposed, so as to attract (as He does now) universal regard. All men had transacted with Joseph before; now they shall transact directly with Pharaoh. The "all," therefore, is not to be pressed, as St. Gregory of Nyssa pressed it, to mean absolute universality, that not being in the purview of the writer at the moment. Indeed, such an interpretation would "include the devil and his angels in the future

[1] St. John xii. 31.

may we plead with Him *the honour of His name,* when we pray Him to save, and help us, and bring us to His eternal kingdom; "O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it *for thy name's*

supposed restoration, as St. Gregory's editor observes." [See the present Bishop of Lincoln's "Two Sermons on the Duration and Degrees of Future Rewards and Punishments," Appendix, Note B. "On certain passages in the writings of Gregory of Nyssa," p. 53].

One of the passages referred to by Mr. Jukes as favouring his view, I respectfully think that he entirely misinterprets, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."[1] Surely the dying here is merely physical death, and the being made alive merely the resurrection of the body, a process which is to take place upon both the saved and the lost, in virtue of Christ's having united Himself to the nature of both. So certainly Chrysostom, whose comment is this (In Epist. I. Ad. Cor. Hom. xxxix. tom. x. p. 367. Parisiis, 1732):—"What! *all* shall be made alive? Pray, did people die in Adam with the death of sin?[2] If so, how then was Noah righteous in his generation? how Abraham? how Job? how all the rest? And tell me, pray, shall *all* be made alive in Christ? Where then are those who are led away into hell? Thus, *if this be said of the body, the doctrine stands;* but if of righteousness *and sin, it doth so no longer. Further, lest on hearing that the revival is common*

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 22.

[2] We are not to understand Chrysostom as denying, in general, that persons derive spiritual death from Adam (which would be to deny the doctrine of original sin), but merely that in this particular passage the death spoken of as derived to all is not spiritual but natural death.

sake;[1] *For thy name's sake,* O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great;"[2] or, as our Litany instructs us to pray, "O Lord, arise, help us, and deliver us, *for thy name's sake—for thine honour.*"

to all, thou shouldest suppose that sinners also are saved, he adds (ver. 23), 'But every man in his own order.' *For do not, because thou hearest of a resurrection, imagine that all enjoy the same benefits. Since, if in the punishment all will not suffer alike, but the difference is great; much more where there are sinners and righteous men, shall the separation be much wider.*"

It may be observed, in general, of the passages cited, that in none of them is the writer speaking of set purpose, *and as the main point of his argument,* of the punishment of the wicked. At best, the doctrine of their future restoration is only an inference, and a precarious one, from what is said. If their ultimate restoration seems to be taught in those passages, it is only as an *obiter dictum.* Whereas in passages where the sacred writer deals with the sad subject expressly (as in Rev. xxi. 8; xxii. 15), we may safely challenge any one to discover the faintest glimmer of hope.

[1] Jer. xiv. 7. [2] Psalm xxv. 11.

Sermon V.

LESSONS OF THE STORY OF THE CRUCIFIED MALEFACTORS.

From all evil and mischief; from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil; from thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation,

GOOD LORD, DELIVER US.

Sermon V.

LESSONS OF THE STORY OF THE CRUCIFIED MALEFACTORS.

"And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."—Luke xxiii. 39-44.

The devotion of the old Fathers, which ever luxuriated in the figurative, and not unfrequently led them to discern a true and real type, where the drier habit of mind of modern theologians sees nothing but a literal historical narrative, found in the crucifixion of our Lord a sort of augury of the universal judgment, over which He is to preside. "God reigneth

from the tree," they said, recognising the cross of Christ as a species of throne. And certainly, it is on His Cross that He attracts, and by His Cross that He reigns over, the hearts of His people, according to that word of His own ; "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."[1] But their allegorizing went more circumstantially into the narrative of the crucifixion than this. In the penitent and impenitent brigand, who hung on either side of the cross, they saw a presage, or rather an actual specimen, of the sheep and the goats, who shall be set respectively on the right and left hand of the King on the last great day,[2] and shall hear their respective sentences falling from His lips.[3] If, then, I find in this narrative two lessons, both bearing on the subject of Eternal Punishment, or in other words, on the sentence which banishes the wicked and ungodly from God, I shall not be travelling altogether out of the line of ancient exposition. And two such lessons I do find. One of them is the fundamental difference of character between man and man. The

[1] St. John xii. 32. [2] St. Matt. xxv. 33.
[3] St. Matt. xxv. 34 41

other is the effect of unsanctified suffering. These two lessons, it is true, have no other connexion than that both of them are conveyed by the same narrative, and that both of them illustrate, though in different ways, the subject with which we are dealing in the present series of Sermons. But it is hoped that this connexion is sufficient to justify the consideration of them in the same discourse.

I. And, first, *the fundamental difference of character between man and man.* I say *fundamental*, with an emphasis upon the word. In the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, another Scriptural passage which has the closest possible bearing upon our subject, the different conditions of the rich man and the beggar after death are exhibited to us in striking contrast with one another. And it is said that between these two conditions "a great gulf is fixed"[1]—a chasm which prevents any communication between the parties on either side of it. Now this "great gulf," which separates the destinies of the righteous and the wicked in another world, must surely represent a great gulf which separates their characters when

[1] See St. Luke xvi. 26.

they pass out of life. It is inconceivable that the Judge of all the earth, who must do right, should make a great separation of destiny, without a real corresponding separation in the characters of those who are thus dealt with. But such a fundamental separation of character it is a little hard to realise in times when persecution, on account of religious persuasion or religious earnestness, has ceased, and men are seldom or ever brought up face to face with any test, which would serve to discriminate their characters as in their main bias for or against God. That cursory survey of human life which an observer from the outside naturally takes, more especially at periods like the present, when education and religious sentiment are widely diffused, and the surface of society is Christianized, does not seem to justify any such distinction of men into two opposite and antagonistic classes as Holy Scripture with a stern and rigid inflexibility everywhere insists upon, and as of course furnishes the basis for an entirely contrasted lot in the world beyond the grave. Rather, the view that a superficial observer takes of human character resembles that which some scientists pro-

fess to take of Creation, that there are numberless grades by which the lower creature passes upward into the higher, but a great and abrupt leap, a chasm, nowhere. Placing the highest forms of *brute* intelligence and the lowest forms of *human* intelligence side by side, and noticing but very little difference between them, these scientists are prepared to believe that man's reason is not a thing specifically different from the instinct of brutes, but that, as reason debased and degenerate would become instinct, so instinct developed and cultivated would in time become reason. And similarly the popular view of human character, the view which most readily approves itself to observers from without, is, that there are infinite gradations of good and evil, but pronounced and unqualified evil scarcely anywhere, and certainly pronounced and unqualified good nowhere. "Where is the man to be found," exclaim the assailants of the doctrine of Everlasting Punishment, "in whom, however evil and worldly-minded he may be, there is no good thing?" And it is also asked, and certainly with great show of reason and truth, "Where is the holy, spiritually-minded man

to be found, the true servant of God in the main bent of his will, in whom there are not great infirmities and faults of temper and the tongue, disqualifying him for that communion with glorified saints in another world, which is called in the Parable the bosom of Abraham, almost as much as, on the other hand, touches of natural sensibility and natural affection disqualify for the flames and torments on the region which lies on the other side of the great gulf?" Now, to those who feel that to be simply led by the hand of the Divine Teacher, even where our feeble reason is unable to follow Him, is far safer and far wiser than to trust to our own speculations on a subject confessedly beyond us, it will at least seem worthy of observation that our Lord *does* represent natural sensibilities and affections as operating in the place of torment; "I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment."[1] From which we may fairly infer that these sensibilities, good though they may

[1] St. Luke xvi. 27.

be in a certain sense, and undoubtedly beautiful, yet stand clear of that radical and fundamental difference of character, in virtue of which one man's portion is allotted to him on one side the gulf and another's on another. For surely, just as common sense, which is stronger in the long run than all scientific theories, teaches that there is a specific difference (standing in the reason and conscience) between the intelligence of man and that of brutes (for when has the instinct of animals enabled them to make any improvement of their condition ?), so a fundamental specific difference between one character and another, consisting in the predominant bias of the will, and in the developement of the moral and spiritual faculties, is popularly recognised by ourselves, as well as most clearly and unequivocally asserted in Scripture. For is it not matter of common observation that the amiabilities of natural character, and what is called principle, do not always go together ? Have we never felt respecting certain persons, and given expression to the idea, that, while they are by no means attractive socially, while in ordinary intercourse they are angular and difficult to get on with, there is yet

good stuff in their character, which will stand the trial when pressure is put upon them ; while we might not like them as associates, we feel that, if we were in difficulty or trouble, they would reach out a helping hand to us more promptly and more generously than others who might profess much warmer attachment? And, on the other hand, do we not often come across those who, while they exhibit very considerable natural amiabilities, are sadly wanting in moral stamina ; when it comes to a question of making a sacrifice, of incurring loss or unpopularity in the cause of truth and right, we feel that they could not be depended upon? Amiabilities, sensibilities, kindly, genial, generous impulses, are attractive and beautiful things in their way ; but they fall short of being moral principle ; the former have their seat in the emotional part of our nature, the latter in the conscience and will ; the one is the blossom which the tree puts forth, the other is the fruit. We might augur, then, from a survey of human life, a fundamental difference in the character of men. But Holy Scripture states this fundamental difference with an uncompromising decision, which

might seem, until we discern the loving design of it, almost harsh and indiscriminating, and withal gives the difference such a prominence as to throw into the shade all the many subordinate gradations among persons falling on one side of the line or the other. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."[1] "So then they that are in the flesh" (however profuse a show they may make of the blossom of natural amiabilities) "cannot please God."[2] Simon Peter has his faults, his great faults. He is self-reliant and somewhat presumptuous; he is impulsive and precipitate in moments of excitement, while he quite loses his nerve and becomes timid when the excitement has collapsed; truly attached to his Master, he wavers sadly, even shamefully, in his attachment; and, even after the Holy Ghost has descended on him at Pentecost, he shrinks sensitively from unpopularity among the school he represents, and is by no means as brave as he might be in avowing before men the convictions to which God had led him.[3] Judas

[1] St. John iii. 6. [2] Rom. viii. 8.
[3] See Gal. ii. 11, 12, 13.

Iscariot, on the other hand, has good points about him. He took a bribe, indeed, to betray Christ into the hands of His enemies; but, as soon as he found that those enemies would proceed to extremities with the Saviour, and that the Saviour would not, by the exercise of His miraculous power, offer any obstruction to their doing so, he made restitution of the bribe, flung it away from him on the Temple-floor as an accursed thing. He confessed his own guilt and his Master's innocence before men, from whom he was well aware that he should receive no sympathy; who, he must have known, would only despise and deride him. He fell a victim to frantic remorse; and, though remorse is very far from being repentance, yet it and repentance have certain common ingredients—shame, accusation of self, indignation with self.—And yet, the faults of Peter and the good points of Judas notwithstanding, what a vast gulf was there between them! How essentially and eternally distinguished were the characters of the two! Do you ask me in what this essential distinction consisted? Doubtless, in the fact that St. Peter's attraction to our blessed Lord was of a genuine

spiritual character (though alloyed, doubtless, as in the case of *all* the Apostles, with carnal hopes and aspirations which were destined to be disappointed), whereas, what had attracted Judas was simply and solely the expectation of an earthly kingdom, which our Lord's miracles convinced Judas that He *could* set up, and in the honours and emoluments of which Judas promised himself a share. Accordingly, when there was a large secession of disciples from our Lord, owing to the perplexing character of His utterances, the spiritual man, who had found in these utterances, hard as they occasionally were, something which met his soul's deepest needs, behaved like Ruth to Naomi,[1] and vowed a closer adherence than ever, amid the general disaffection, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."[2] Peter spoke for his colleagues as well as for himself. And our Lord's insight into men's hearts showed Him that there was one among the twelve whose convictions Peter's words did not represent, one who had joined Him without any spirit-

[1] See Ruth i. 14, 16, 17. [2] St. John vi. 68, 69.

ual convictions, or in whom, if such convictions did at one time exist, they had been suppressed and stifled by covetousness, worldly aims, and conscious acts of dishonesty; one who would shortly lend himself to the devil as an instrument for putting Christ out of the way, and thus do the devil's work, and eventually share the devil's doom. That false-hearted disciple should now have his warning, which was doubtless intended to reclaim him, and might have done so. The Lord's eyes of fire marked a great difference between him and his colleagues. The same in outward privileges and in the circumstance of their appointment, they differed fundamentally in character. Jesus accordingly, in answering the profession of adherence made by their representative in their name, recognised this fundamental difference;—"Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?"[1]—And the same great gulf of character separates one from another the brigands on the Cross. Judged simply by God's law, both had been wicked men in times past, outlaws of society, living in constant violation of the eighth, and probably also of the sixth, commandment. But in

[1] St. John vi. 70.

their latest hour they are suddenly brought up to be tested, and their everlasting doom settled, by the law not of works but of faith. Christ is visibly set forth before their eyes, crucified for men; each has an opportunity of observing His sweet, patient, majestic demeanour; each hears Him pray for His murderers, as His precious Blood gushes out under the rude impact of the nails; each has been told of the mighty deeds of superhuman benevolence and power which this reputed malefactor has wrought; each has his attention busied with the deportment and words of Jesus; and what they had heard, and what they see, becomes for them a touchstone, revealing the thoughts of the hearts of each. And what is the result of the application of the touchstone? It is as when a chemical test is thrown into two liquids equally colourless and transparent; and immediately, while the one remains unaltered to the eye, the other turns into a deep blue, revealing the presence of some ingredient which was not suspected before the application of the test. The elements of a spiritual character are revealed in one. There is the faith which apprehends an unseen future, and leads the man to endeavour to

make some provision against it with his latest breath. There is the justification of God's dealings with him, and the taking of his own cruel punishment as well merited. There is also the brotherly feeling, which leads him to make the only effort open to him to bring his comrade to a right mind. There is prayer, short, simple, and fervent, in which he throws himself on the clemency of his Fellow-Sufferer. And there is that on which all this is built, a spiritual insight into the character, power, and majesty of Christ, even while all His outward circumstances and surroundings seemed to proclaim His desertion by God and man, when not only the most ill-conditioned of the people, but doctors of divinity, the accredited teachers and guides of Israel, are flouting His pretensions and flinging at Him their cutting sarcasms ; "They that sit in the gate speak against me : and the drunkards make songs upon me."[1] We are not informed what effect the penitent thief's confession of Christ had upon the bystanders. But the natural and probable effect would be to divert upon himself some of the gibes and sarcasms, of which

[1] Psalm lxix. 12, P.B.V.

hitherto the Saviour had been the sole object; any one who sided with Him at His crucifixion, when "all His acquaintance, and" even "the women that followed him from Galilee *stood afar off*,"[1] must have come in, one would think, for a share of His obloquy. The impenitent malefactor, on the other hand, proof against that feeling of sympathy which the endurance of a common suffering has often engendered, makes common cause with the populace and their leaders, and sides against Him who is now the "scorn of men and the outcast of people."[2] Not that we are warranted in supposing that in natural character he was mean and ungenerous. Like most members of gangs of banditti or pirates, he had probably some chivalrous feeling, and doubtless, in many a marauding expedition, had put his life in his hand in a sufficiently gallant manner. Though such people set the laws of God and man at defiance, yet they have their own code of honour and generosity, in the observance of which they will be even punctilious; and there is no reason to think that this man was an exception to the usual character of men of his class. Tried by the standard

[1] St. Luke xxiii. 49. [2] Psalm xxii. 6.

of natural sentiment, he would have been as good as they. But when the test of spiritual discernment and appreciation of exalted virtue is applied to his character, it immediately loses all appearance of excellence, and becomes coarse, rude, and blasphemous. The calm, sweet, and sublime deportment of the Divine Sufferer at his side has no influence upon him; there is no spiritual element in his character; or, if there be, it is undeveloped; or, if it tries to put itself forth, he crushes it down by an effort of the will as a mean and spiritless thought, the expression of which would bring him into disrepute with the sneering blaspheming spectators around him; he succumbs not, he will not succumb, to the spectacle of a dying Christ; for he is "the natural man," who sees nothing in such a spectacle but what strikes the outward senses; what strikes the inward eye is "spiritually discerned."[1] We cannot, indeed, say anything for certain respecting the amount of impression in our Lord's favour which the spectacle of the crucifixion may have made upon him, and others of a like mind, who

[1] See 1 Cor. ii. 14.

witnessed it. From St. Luke's assertion that "all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned,"[1] we gather that among the populace, at all events, what transpired made a strong and general sensation. How far the impenitent thief and others, from whose lips only words of contumely proceeded, may have participated in that sensation, it is impossible, nor is it at all necessary, to ascertain; all that we can know is, that if such persons had convictions and impressions in connexion with the scene, they did not allow them to transpire; the convictions and impressions did not carry the day; remained in the emotional part of the character, and did not pass into the will, which is the critical faculty of the soul; they did not lead, as in the case of the penitent thief, to the confession of Christ before men, which, equally with the belief of Him in the heart, is essential to salvation.[2] And it is this difference between the state of the will in the two men which establishes a great gulf of character between them; for as a man's will is, so is he in the sight of God. While the two have

[1] St. Luke xxiii. 48. [2] See Rom. x. 9.

much in common, there is no real moral or spiritual sympathy between them ; and those words of Christ accommodate themselves to the case; "I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed" (are there not here two men on one deathbed, the cross?) ; "the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left ;"[1] not arbitrarily either taken or left, but because, when the spectacle of perfect goodness is exhibited under the eyes of both, one, in the mysterious freedom of the human will, discloses a susceptibility to the spectacle, and therefore an affinity with goodness, and the other discloses none ; because, when the same means of conviction as to our Lord's claims and character were vouchsafed to both, one immediately yielded to the conviction, while the other rudely and coarsely steeled himself against it, and joined in the popular ribaldry which for the hour was in the ascendant. If the eternal doom of either is so widely different ; if one, seizing eagerly the hand of the Saviour's power and mercy, is snatched from the abyss of eternal ruin, and the other, sneering and scoffing at the most consummate

[1] St. Luke xvii. 34.

exhibition of suffering virtue which the world had ever seen, is allowed to drop into that abyss like a sere and shrivelled leaf, whirled by an autumnal blast from a beetling precipice down some dark ravine, it is because the two men, though probably much resembling one another in natural sentiment, are fundamentally different from one another in moral and spiritual character.

My brethren, there is as broad a line of demarcation between the spiritual man in his most rudimentary stage and the natural man in his most cultivated and highly-developed stage, as between reason and instinct. The one has a faculty of appreciation—has, if you please, senses—which the other entirely lacks. The difference (and of course it is an enormous difference) is that, whereas instinct can never by any possibility become reason, because it has it not in it to do so, the natural man (having a conscience and moral faculty within him, which, if quickened by God's Spirit, may become the nucleus of his recovery) may, and often does, by God's grace, become a spiritual man during this state of probation, while the character is yet plastic, and has not finally crystallized

in a certain shape. Still, while the broad line of demarcation may always, by God's grace, be crossed in this life, it is there, running in and out invisibly amongst us, and parting off man from man. On which side of the line are you,—am I? In answering this solemn question it behoves us to be on our guard against the flatteries of a heart which is said to be "deceitful above all things.[1]" The suffering Christ, the cross-bearing Christ, Christ maligned by the world and rejected of men, is the touchstone; as it is written; "This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; . . . *that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.*"[2] Has He for us so much of attractiveness that we should be ready to cast in our lot with Him, even were all the world arrayed in contumely and scorn against Him? Does His meritorious Cross and Passion, exhibited to us in God's word, and set forth, as it were, before our eyes in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, irresistibly touch and draw us? And when we are touched and drawn, do we yield to the impression, or try to crush

[1] See Jer. xvii. 9. [2] St. Luke ii. 34, 35.

it down, lest it should demand larger sacrifices, and lead to a standard of spirituality inconveniently high and generally unpopular? In a word, has the impression penetrated to the will? It is a very crucial question. May we have grace not to shrink from it, but to face it boldly and answer it candidly!

II. Another lesson taught by our text, and bearing closely on the subject of Eternal Punishment, is *the effect of unsanctified suffering.* In the penitent malefactor we are presented with a palmary instance of the way in which suffering, in the hand of God's Spirit, softens, subdues, and sanctifies. We see how it turns the eye of the soul upon God with deep awe ("Dost not thou fear God?"), and yet with modest humble hope, ("Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom"); how it leads a man to humble himself and accept the punishment of his iniquity, leads him to justify God in all that He does and all that He lays upon us ("We indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds"); and because it so often pleases Almighty God to sanctify sorrow, and to make suffering in one

shape or another the instrument of bringing men to Himself, we get the habit of speaking, and therefore of thinking, of suffering (for our words by a certain law of our nature react upon our ideas), as if suffering, in itself and by itself, could work a change for the better on men's minds. But what a reproof of this mistake have we in the scene which our text brings before us! Here is unsanctified suffering by the side of the sanctified; and what effect has it? Does it soften? does it melt? does it humble? does it make the heart malleable? does it open it to religious impressions? Alas, alas! left to its natural action, suffering does the very reverse of all this. It wraps us up more tightly than ever in the robe of our own selfishness; "Save us"—this is its one cry, its one solicitude—"Save us"—not from the wrath of God, and from everlasting damnation (that cry, though it is prompted by self-love, yet has in it an element of faith in the unseen world, and thus is to a certain extent spiritual), but "Save us from the earthly pains and penalties of sin!" It steels the heart against God as inflicting undue retribution, renders the man defiant, and if he have the moral

courage to blaspheme, draws words of blasphemy from his mouth; "One of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him." Is any one here then looking to the languors or to the sufferings of a deathbed to extort from him that cry of humiliation, that heartfelt application to the Redeemer, which he feels that he cannot make with sincerity in the hour of health and comfort, and which he virtually, if not by a formal decision, makes up his mind to postpone to a more convenient season? Let him consider how very possibly the effect of the last trial may be to harden the heart, to render it selfish, and to induce a fatal indifference, as was the case with the impenitent malefactor, to any sufferings but our own; how certainly and infallibly this will be the effect, unless the special grace of God should accompany it. I say the *special* grace of God. For is not the ordinary cry, which pain naturally extorts from us, a cry for relief as being the one thing needful, the one thing of urgent importance, until we obtain which we cannot turn our minds to anything else—a note this which is heard quite audibly in the malefactor's taunt, "If thou be Christ, save us"? "Let the Christ rid me

" of these pains, and I will thank Him; but if " He suffers me to hang here still in agony, I will " rail on Him with my latest breath, and tell " Him He is an impostor." Putting aside the cruelty and blasphemy of the taunt, there was nothing in the man's deprecation of pain, and desire to be freed from it, which merited censure. To do anything more and better, when we are suffering severely, would be to rise above nature, as God's special grace enabled the penitent malefactor, and has enabled thousands of others, to rise. But what reasonable hope can there be that He will enable any of us so to rise above nature in the pains of death, if we have postponed the seeking Him in right earnest until those pains are upon us?

You allege, however, that, even where the pains and sufferings of death have totally failed in bringing the mind into a right direction, nay, have hardened it (as they did in the case of the impenitent malefactor, and probably have done in many other cases) in a wrong one, there the more awful and sterner penalties of the world to come, may, in the unspeakable mercy

of God, and under some imaginary dispensation of His grace, work after the lapse of many ages a change of mind, which shall turn the reprobate into the elect, and restore to God's favour every lost soul. It appears to me that reason, as well as Revelation, arrays itself against any such hypothesis. In plain language, the position is that, in another state of existence, there will still be a dispensation of grace, under which the finally impenitent will undergo a second probation; for it is absolutely certain that, except under a dispensation of grace, suffering must have anything but a sanctifying and softening effect. Putting out of sight the conflict of such a position with the solemn and emphatic assurance, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation,"[1] for which the theory seems to substitute, "Then, as well as now, may be expected to be an accepted time and a day of salvation,"—we may be allowed to ask whether such a theory, in whatever language it may be disguised by its supporters, does not in fact eliminate probation altogether from the scheme of God's dealings, as something which does not really and truly enter into the

[1] 2 Cor. vi. 2.

Divine plan. For is the notion of probation compatible with the idea that all will eventually, though after the lapse of ages and through a discipline intensely severe, be sanctified and saved? Suppose the second experiment upon human characters to fail, as the first has done. A third experiment must then be made; but, however many the experiments, the theory requires that at length there shall be success. Now, if there is ultimately to be in all cases success, is this really probation? Is it not a condition of the very idea of probation, that some will eventually stand, and others will eventually fall? And if, on the contrary, the result of God's dealings with man is to be that all are eventually to stand, that the impenitent malefactor, by the pressure of sanctified suffering beyond the grave, is to be brought to the penitent's state of mind, and to be a sharer of the penitent's blessedness, can we say that discrimination of character is really a part of God's plan, and of the process which He is carrying on with us? Ought not the process rather to be called amelioration of character, and gradual extermination of all the evil which found its way into man's nature with the Fall? And

does not the logical conclusion from the theory even go to the denial of free will? For is it really compatible with the true idea of free will that all should eventually choose aright? On the theory of the advocates of universal restoration, we are to suppose that the pressure of additional suffering, seconded of course by God's grace, will, after the lapse of ages, result in a right choice, and that both suffering and grace will continue till the result is secured. It is impossible to help asking oneself whether the pressure supposed to be so put upon the character would not in fact amount to compulsion, whether the moral process (if such it could be called) would have any element of free love or free appreciation of the Divine goodness in it—whether, in short, the choice in such a case would be choice at all.

As to the testimony of Revelation on the subject of conceivable offers of mercy beyond the grave, the sole passage of Holy Scripture which can be appealed to as even suggesting such an idea,—that which speaks of Christ's preaching to the spirits in prison[1]—being open to an interpretation totally dif-

[1] See 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19, 20. The reader will find this famous passage commented upon more at length in the Preface.

ferent from that which would make it applicable to the case, and, even if it be thought applicable, merely recording an incident of our Lord's past history, when He was in the realm of the dead, without giving the faintest surmise that He will ever do the same thing again,—is surely the slenderest of slender threads on which to hang a conclusion of such vast import, as that men generally will have another term of probation allowed them, after having rejected mercy in this life.

Let us close the present argument by reflecting on the exceeding awfulness, even in the estimate of reason, of the case of those who, having been fully and fairly tried under the offers of the Gospel, have been found wanting in that preliminary judgment upon human character, which we must suppose to be passed at death, and to anticipate the public and formal sentence at the last day. During the appointed term of life grace was all along concurrent with probation ; but grace has made its offers, and held out its invitations and allurements in vain ; and probation has run its course and come to an end.

"There remaineth" then "no more sacrifice for sins," (words which undoubtedly seem to shut the door of repentance and hope after death upon characters of a certain class, however those characters are to be defined), "but" only "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."[1] And, apart from grace, the natural action of this anticipation upon the heart would be to harden, to wrap the man in his selfishness, to lead him to hurl defiance at the justice which has brought this misery upon him. And every such rising of the defiant heart against the Holy One would be, in the natural order of things, visited with a fresh infliction. And every such infliction would harden to a fresh defiance. What term can be seen to such sufferings by the eye of reason, even had Holy Scripture said nothing about "the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched?" And the only alternative is to suppose a second probation under more favourable conditions; of which probation, in the case of those who have been already tried under the Gospel, the Holy Scriptures hold out no hope

[1] Heb. x. 27.

whatever, nay, rather, seem to close effectually the door of hope. And let us be sure that it is in the tenderness of Divine mercy they close it, lest sinners should lay the flattering unction to their soul that the long-suffering of God will outlast this state of existence, and bring to bear upon the will a more powerful artillery of persuasion in another. O Lord, let Thy long-suffering lead us to repentance,[1] "while it is called to day,"[2] and keep us ever mindful of those words which fell for our admonition from the lips of Infinite Love ;—"Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able, when once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us ; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are . . . . depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."[3]

[1] See Rom. ii. 4. [2] Heb. iii. 13.
[3] St. Luke xiii, 24, 25, 27.

Sermon VI.

SCRIPTURAL MODIFICATIONS OF THE DIFFICULTY

From all evil and mischief; from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil; from thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation,

GOOD LORD, DELIVER US.

Sermon VI.

SCRIPTURAL MODIFICATIONS OF THE DIFFICULTY.

"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"—Gen. xviii. 25.

The doctrine of Eternal Punishment, which has formed the subject of this series of Sermons, must always, with our present limited faculties, involve a difficulty to the reason, having this feature, indeed, in common with all the leading articles of the Christian Faith. But the difficulty, like most others which are raised by parts of God's Word, is very much extenuated, and reduced to more moderate dimensions, by the careful consideration of other parts. We might imagine, on the first survey of certain Scriptural statements as to the function which God's preventing and assisting grace has to discharge in our salvation, that there was no room in the scheme of

grace for human endeavour and the action of man's free will; but we have only to give due consideration to the precept, "Work out your own salvation,"[1] to see that there is another side of the truth, which, taken concurrently with the doctrine of grace, removes misapprehensions and difficulties besetting that doctrine, and makes it far easier to receive than it would be in the absence of such correctives.

The parts of Scriptural teaching, which relieve the difficulties connected with the awful subject of Eternal Punishment, are mainly three. They have to do respectively with the principle on which judgment will be administered, with the measure to be observed in punishment, and with the fact that all punishment will be in pursuance of a moral law.

I. *The principle, on which judgment will be administered*, is announced by our Lord in those pregnant words of His in the twelfth Chapter of St. Luke; "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."[2] The words were uttered in a connexion which gave

[1] Phil. ii. 12.

[2] St. Luke xii. 48.

them great point. Our Lord having spoken of the blessedness of those servants, who should be found watching at His second Advent, and ready to open unto Him immediately,[1] St. Peter thereupon raised the question whether what He had said had reference to the case of the disciples only, or to all the world; "Lord, speakest thou this parable to us," (πρὸς ἡμᾶς, in reference to us) "or even to all?"[2] Hereupon our Lord, answering the question indirectly, as was His wont, takes occasion to assure the Apostle, and through him the whole body of disciples, whose spokesman he was, that God would reckon with them for the opportunities, privileges, light, and knowledge, with which He had gifted them, inflicting on them many stripes should they be found unfaithful,[3] whereas those who were less favoured than themselves,—the world outside the ring-fence of the Church,—should be, for sinning against their much smaller measure of light, punished with far greater leniency.[4] Thus the words, like most others of our Lord's, had an occasion out of which they grew; but

[1] St. Luke, xii. vv. 36, 37, 38.
[2] V. 41.
[3] V. 47.
[4] V. 48.

again, like most of His words, they soar high above their context, and announce the great principle on which Christ, the Eternal Judge, will administer the judgment of the last great day. For those who have basked in Gospel sunlight, who have had the fullest means of knowing the whole truth of God, have had it submitted to them plainly, faithfully, forcibly, have had their attention called to it as a Divine message of the deepest and most paramount concern,—for them the terms of salvation, as dictated by the Saviour Himself to His earliest Evangelists, are as follows; "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."[1] It stands to reason that we are not to divorce the earlier part of this injunction from the later. Scripture can never, except at the risk of a fatal misapprehension, be torn away from its connexion with its immediate context. When our Lord warns His Apostles, in the same breath in which He issues to them His universal commission to preach the Gospel, that "he that believeth not,

[1] St. Mark xvi. 15, 16.

shall be damned," He is assuredly to be understood as meaning, "He that believeth not, after you have fulfilled towards him your commission, after he has heard the glad tidings from your inspired lips." Such a person will have had "much committed unto him;" and of him, accordingly, "much,"—even the adherence of true faith, working by love, and confessing Christ before men in the Sacrament of Baptism, "will be required." But nothing whatsoever is determined by this passage respecting the salvability or eternal destiny of the heathen, nor, let me add, respecting the eternal destiny of that vast class of souls, who, though living in a Christian country, and surrounded on all sides by the means of grace, have never, for whatever reasons, had the Gospel message fairly, fully, and faithfully laid before them, so as to be able to exercise a deliberate choice in the acceptance or rejection of Christ. What our ascending Saviour lays down in these solemn parting words is just this,—this, and nothing more, this, and nothing less—that every one who has heard the Gospel from the lips of an inspired Apostle, has had the invitations of grace pressed upon him by one of

Christ's commissioned ambassadors, shall, on account of his deliberate rejection of the proffered boon, be condemned at the judgment, and so incur the awful penalty of "everlasting damnation." "But none of us," you say, "is literally in this position." None, I grant you, in literally the same position, but very many of us in almost the equivalent of it. If we have never heard Apostles preach, we have read their inspired writings, and in those writings they have fully communicated to us all they had to communicate, which it behoves us to know; the whole counsel of God so far as it concerns the salvation of man. We have had the Apostolic message of grace and mercy pressed upon us by the uninspired men, on whom has devolved the Apostolic ministry. And the message, as we cannot deny, has been seconded by the inspirations and instigations of grace, which was communicated to us in germ at our Baptism, and which, like a latent spark resuscitated by a gentle breath, has kindled up again under the appeals made at various times to our consciences. "How shall we escape," we may well say of ourselves, each one in accents of warning to his own soul, "if we neglect so

great salvation?"[1] Yes; we may say it of ourselves, safely, profitably, wholesomely.[2] But there are vast numbers of our fellow-countrymen, vast numbers of our fellow-Christians in other countries, who have been so far less favoured than ourselves as to opportunities, time for learning, means of learning, that, though they may have been baptized in infancy, their amount of religious knowledge and cultivation shades off in various degrees into the darkness and ignorance of heathenism. Of how many of those poor souls in our large towns, whose whole life is one long drudgery on week-days from morning to night, can it be said that they have had Christ and His full and free salvation proposed to them fairly and fully, and have deliberately rejected Him? Of very, very few, I trow. Nor has their ignorance been altogether their own fault, though in many cases it may have been so to a certain extent. Some can-

[1] Heb. ii. 3.

[2] I mean by this that *each one of us* may say it *of himself* safely and profitably. As to others, it is never safe or right to judge them. They may seem to us to enjoy all the same opportunities and privileges as ourselves; and outwardly it may be so; but we cannot at all say how far they have been inwardly impressed, and have been faithful or unfaithful to impressions.

not read; or can read but so imperfectly and clumsily, that reading can hardly be said to be an avenue whereby ideas pass into the mind. Some, if they have attended church, have never heard there anything more quickening to the conscience, more attractive to the affections, more influential with the will, than dry moral lectures on the duties inculcated by Christianity. Others, whose lot is cast in rural districts, have left school so young, and have so low an amount of mental developement, that even the rudimentary religious ideas seem to be out of their reach. It is not ours to judge them; on the contrary, it is ours to believe with a full and firm faith that the Judge of quick and dead will apply to each of these souls with the utmost exactitude, with the most scrupulous equity, the principle which He has Himself announced, of holding men responsible, not for what they have not received, but for what they have, and will graciously accept thousands of them, in whom He sees that they have responded in their measure to the very limited amount of light and knowledge, which has been placed within their reach. There is a conscience in each of them, and Nature (the un-

written Bible of the heathen) has borne to each of them her testimony to God's eternal power and Godhead,[1] but in numbers of them the conscience has received so very little developement and cultivation, and the written Bible (from circumstances over which they have had little, if any, control) has been so little accessible to them, that to decide their eternal doom by at all the same standard which is applied to those, whose moral sense has been fully trained and elicited by all the assistances of Revelation and Christian education, would be as contrary to our own natural conceptions of the Divine character, as to the principles upon which Christ expressly announces that God will deal with men.

What has been said cannot fail to raise the question whether, in point of fact, any, with few or no aids but what they obtain from the natural conscience, and from the silent teaching of God's works, do act up to the measure of light vouchsafed to them? To questions of this sort Holy Scripture furnishes but scanty materials for a reply, for the very sufficient reason that persons, "to whom

[1] See Rom. i. 20, and ii. 14, 15.

the word of God comes,"[1] cease, by the very fact of its coming to them, to have any personal concern in matters touching those to whom it does not come. To every impertinent inquiry respecting the prospects of our less favoured neighbour, the reply of God's book virtually is; "What is that to thee? Follow thou me."[2] But at the same time, something of an answer to the question just raised is furnished by St. Paul, where he says incidentally, "When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law."[3] This certainly seems to be an admission that certain of the ancient heathen did live more or less up to the light afforded them by the moral sense, and by the spectacle of God's works, while the assertion which lies in the immediately foregoing context—"As many as have sinned without law" (that is, without the law of Moses), "shall also perish without law" (they shall not have a criterion applied to their character and conduct, which has never been promulgated to them): "and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law,"[4]

[1] See this phrase for having Revelation addressed to one, in St. John x. 35.

[2] See St. John xxi. 22. [3] Rom. ii. 14. [4] Rom. ii. 12.

—strongly confirms and bears out the Saviour's own announcement of the principle on which judgment will be administered; "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."[1] It will perhaps be thought that the idea of a heathen (or a nominal Christian, whose opportunities and knowledge have been little more than those vouchsafed to a heathen) being ultimately accepted and saved by his compliance with some standard other than that of conscious faith in Christ, conflicts with the assertion of Holy Scripture, that there is "no salvation in any other" but Jesus Christ; "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,"[2] and with our own eighteenth Article based upon this passage, which pronounces them "accursed that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature." But there is no real inconsistency between the idea of the salvation of a heathen and the teaching of Holy Scrip-

[1] St. Luke xii. 48. [2] Acts iv. 12.

ture and our Church, when the latter is rightly apprehended. That no man can be saved independently of Christ, and of the virtue residing (according to the uniform testimony of God's Word) in His blood, merits, and grace, is a truth of which all Scripture is full, and is indeed the basis-truth of Revelation. But it is quite another position to assert that without conscious knowledge of Christ, and a conscious exercise of faith in Christ, salvation is an impossibility. No soul can see salvation but by the merits of Christ; but we cannot say what instrument God may please to employ for applying the merits of Christ to those who never heard of Him, or whose knowledge of Him has been utterly insufficient and inadequate. "It is certain by God's Word," says our Office for the Baptism of Infants, "that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved."[1] But how can infants be undoubtedly saved, if not Christ's merits and blood alone, but a conscious knowledge of Christ, and a conscious exercise of faith in Christ, are necessary to salvation? An infant's

[1] Last Rubric but one in "The Ministration of Publick Baptism of Infants."

faculties are not sufficiently developed to know Christ, much less to believe in Him. We are thrown back upon the answer that, since neither the faith nor the knowledge can in this case be had, God justifies and accepts the soul of the infant by some other method of applying to it the merits of Christ, by the Sacrament probably, combined with the faith and earnest prayer of those who "bring the child to His holy baptism." If, then, in one case where knowledge and faith cannot be had, it pleases God to dispense with them, and employ some other instrument for the application of Christ's righteousness, why may He not do the same in the case of a heathen, to whom the glad tidings of salvation have never been made known, and also in the case of those numerous heathens in a Christian country, before whom, from circumstances for which they themselves are scarcely responsible, the gracious offer of salvation through Christ has never been fairly and fully brought? What the exact terms may be on which, for His dear Son's sake, who took upon Him the nature of all men, He will accept and save such souls, we shall do well to refrain from curiously inquiring. They are not clearly revealed;

and since the case is not our own, we have no personal concern with them. But thus much we do know for certain, that no man to whom the Word of God, "preaching peace by Jesus Christ,"[1] really comes, no man to whom the offer of grace and salvation is fully and fairly made, can possibly perish except by the wilful, deliberate, open-eyed rejection of the offer. There must be an act of the will, in order to perdition, shutting out the light which at once reproves the soul of sin[2] and exhibits to it a Saviour,—an act of the human will, not of the Divine; for "God," we are assured, "will have all men to be saved."[3] And if this be the case, we are surely led to infer that no man in the world, whether heathen or half heathen in point of knowledge and privileges, shall be condemned eternally, in whose character there is not found something morally equivalent to that wilful rejection of a free and finished salvation, which alone can seal the doom of those who hear with full intelligence the Gospel's joyful sound. In a word, from what we do know respecting the terms of our own salvation, we are led irresistibly to the conclusion

[1] Acts x. 36. [2] See Eph. v. 13, and St. John xvi. 8.
[3] 1 Tim. ii. 4.

that no man can perish except by his own fault and deliberate choice. No part of the blame will rest with "God our Saviour."

II. *The measure to be observed in future punishment* is another part of the teaching of Holy Scripture on the subject, which serves very much to relieve the difficulties of believing in the eternity of the penalty. "In an eternity of punishment," says Richard Hooker, "there will be great varieties; and it is a rule much built upon in Holy Scripture, that degrees of wickedness will have answerable degrees in the weight of endless punishment."[1] Observe the phrase, "a rule much built upon." It is as if Hooker would thereby indicate that the due balancing of Scriptural theology on the subject of "judgment to come" was very much dependent on the weight given to this doctrine of

[1] Appendix to Book V. of the Ecclesiastical Polity, Vol. II., p. 722, *ed.* Keble, 1836. I am indebted for this reference to the present Bishop of Lincoln's two Sermons "On the duration and degrees of future rewards and punishments" [Rivingtons, 1878], p. 38, note 2. This Tractate contains a valuable summary of testimonies to the eternal duration of future punishment, from the writings of the Fathers and of some of the great Divines of the English Church.

graduated penalties. Future punishment, our Lord expressly tells us, is to be proportioned in its amount to the degree of light and knowledge, and to the degree of privilege, sinned against. *To the degree of light and knowledge.* "That servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself" (there is no word in the original corresponding to "himself;" possibly the meaning may be, "who prepared not those things, which it behoved him to prepare against the time of his master's coming"), "neither did according to his will, *shall be beaten with many stripes.* But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, *shall be beaten with few stripes.*"[1] Our Lord is here speaking figuratively of those solemn sentences of the last day, which cannot by us be otherwise apprehended than in a figure; and the basis of the symbolism which He employs is the precept issued to the judges of Israel in the book of Deuteronomy, whose transactions in administering judgment were to shadow forth those of the Eternal Judge; "If there be a controversy between men, and they come into judgment, that the judges

[1] St. Luke xii. 47, 48.

may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, *according to his fault,* by a certain number."[1] The Eternal Judge, says our Lord, will not be less discriminating and equitable than He enjoins human judges to be; He will not pass upon all a sentence of equal severity; each criminal shall receive stripes *according to his fault by a certain number.* And again, the punishment shall be proportioned *to the degree of privilege sinned against.* It was a high privilege to hear the glad tidings of the kingdom of God from the lips of a messenger commissioned to declare them by the King Himself in person, and acting under the inspiration of His Spirit. Great therefore should be the guilt, and proportionably heavy the punishment, of those who declined to receive such a messenger, and turned away their ears from his message. "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more

[1] Deut. xxv. 1, 2.

tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city."[1] Sodom and Gomorrha, plunged as they were in carnal wickedness, had never been guilty of the spiritual sin of rejecting an ambassador sent direct from God with a message of grace and reconciliation. The doom of Sodom, therefore, would be more tolerable than the doom of a city rejecting those who came to it in Christ's name. But the highest of all privileges is the being addressed by Christ Himself in the Name of the Father, the hearing the words, so full of grace, which fall from His lips, and the looking with one's own eyes upon the mighty works of benevolence and power wrought by His hands. Therefore it is that the inhabitants of the cities of the plain shall fare better in the day of judgment, than the cities which were the scenes of our Lord's ministry. "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven" (in point of spiritual privilege) "shalt be brought down to hell" (consigned to the lowest deep of misery and woe): "for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have

[1] St. Matt. x. 14, 15.

remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."[1] "Hence it is certain," says the present Bishop of Lincoln, "that at the Day of Judgment it will be *more tolerable* for some persons than for others, and that some will receive a heavier doom than others, according to their various degrees of criminality."[2]

As to how the doctrine of these gradations of future punishment is to be harmonized with other texts, which give us only the general sentence upon all the condemned, without entering into details or distinctions (such as, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire"[3]), we need not be solicitous, and ought not to be curious. Both assertions being made by God's infallible Word, are to be held together as certain truths, even if our limited understandings should see no way of reconciling them. But it may be thrown out for consideration whether a single

[1] St. Matt. xi. 23, 24.

[2] Two Sermons on "Duration and degrees of future rewards and punishments," p. 8 [Rivingtons, 1878].

[3] St. Matt. xxv. 41.

punishment for all, a punishment objectively one and the same, might not possibly vary very much subjectively; vary, I mean, in respect of the very various susceptibilities of the persons sentenced to it. Take the analogous case of the punishments inflicted by human law. Two men are sentenced to the same term of penal servitude, and during that term, as the law must not be a respecter of persons, each is dealt with in precisely the same manner, subjected to precisely the same restrictions, made to lead the same hard and monotonous life, without any respect whatever to the habits or associations of his past. It is perfectly evident, however, that those habits and associations may make the greatest possible difference in the severity of the punishment. Disgraces and hardships, which will be felt scarcely at all by a man drawn from the lowest social grade, who has received little or no education, and has been associated from early childhood with thieves and bad characters, will go nigh to break the heart of his brother-convict, who has been brought up in the lap of comfort and plenty, has always moved in respectable society, and has acquired by education certain cultivated and

refined tastes, the power of gratifying which is essential to his happiness. When the contrast between such a past and his present prison-life, joined with the weight of public censure, begins to weigh heavily upon the spirits of such a man, and to break down his self-respect, we are apt at first sight to think that the law is dealing unevenly in visiting him with a sentence, which, though actually the same with that passed upon his brother of low degree, is to him, with his greater susceptibilities of pain—physical, mental, and moral—far more severe. But in truth this very inequality is perfectly equitable. For the educated man of the higher classes has sinned in perpetrating a crime, against a larger measure of light, knowledge, opportunities, and advantages, than his ignorant brother at the lowest end of the social scale. Crime, therefore, in him is doubly or trebly criminal, and therefore is justly visited with a sorer punishment. And yet, on the hypothesis which has been made, the punishment is not sorer in itself, but only sorer in respect of the criminal's susceptibility to it. I venture to throw out this illustration as possibly affording some insight into the way of re-

conciling passages, where gradations of future punishment are spoken of, with those which seem to embrace all the condemned under a single sentence. But the manner of reconciling the two classes of passages is of comparatively little moment, so long as the truth of a variety in future punishments, corresponding to the greater or less degree of criminality incurred, is clearly discerned and firmly held. In every future punishment of course the *pœna damni*, the conscious loss of, and exclusion from, the glory and blessedness of heaven and the converse of saints and angels, will be a common feature ; but even this exclusion will doubtless be far more tolerable to some than to others, in proportion to the much lower developement in them of the moral and spiritual faculties.

III. But there is a third view of our subject, opened out by certain passages of Holy Scripture, which, when duly considered, very much relieves the difficulties connected with it. And this is, that *all future punishment will be awarded,* not only on a principle of equity, not only in greater or less

measure, according to the desert of the sufferer, but also *in pursuance of a moral law.* We read indeed of a formal sentence of the eternal Judge, whereby certain characters are consigned to perdition ("Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire"[1]), and again of God's being "able to destroy both soul and body in hell."[2] But other passages of Holy Scripture teach us that we must not so interpret these texts as not to see behind the sentence the operation of a moral law, of which the sentence is merely the echo and expression, and behind God's agency in the matter of perdition an agency of man, excluding himself by an act of his own free will from communion with God. There was a Divine agency, and an awful effect of Divine retributive justice, in the destruction of the cities of the plain; "We will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it;"[3] "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and He overthrew those cities."[4]

[1] St. Matt. xxv. 41.
[2] St. Matt. x. 28.
[3] Gen. xix. 13.
[4] Gen. xix. 24, 25.

But none the less, because the hand of God was more than usually manifest in this great catastrophe, was the way prepared for it long beforehand by the action of natural laws, connected with the climate, the temperature, and the volcanic character of the country. It was God who imposed these laws upon nature, who presided over the administration of them, and who, by their instrumentality, brought about the catastrophe, at the moment when the wickedness of the inhabitants had grown to a head, and deserved to be swept away, by one great outburst of Divine vengeance, from the face of the earth. Now God is as much the author and administrator of the moral laws impressed upon man, as of the natural laws impressed upon nature. And as in dealing with nature He acts through the instrumentality of natural laws, so in dealing with man in the way of judicial administration, He acts in pursuance of those moral laws which guided His hand in the construction of rational creatures. "Eternal judgment" is none the less—nay, it is all the more—a sentence flowing from His awful lips, a direct effect of His Divine displeasure, because the moral laws impressed upon our nature in its

original constitution, are employed in bringing about the result. To the operation of these moral laws in banishing the impenitent sinner from God, our blessed Lord points in those profound words of His to Nicodemus; "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."[1] It is thus that the Saviour, or (if the words be taken to be no part of the conversation with Nicodemus, but only the Evangelist's inspired commentary upon that conversation) the Spirit of God justifies the dealings of God with the condemned, and exempts Him from all blame in the doom which they incur. Shall we ascribe any blame to the sun, if, when he shows his bright disc above the horizon, and flings abroad his beams with lavish profusion over the earth, spangling the dewdrops with

[1] St. John iii. 17, 18, 19.

rainbow colours, and wakening the feathered songsters in every grove, the thief, the adulterer, the midnight murderer, to whom "the morning is even as the shadow of death," ("if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death"),[1] slink away to their underground cellars; and the beggar, ashamed of his foul and tattered attire, courts the obscurity of his alley and his ill-lighted, ill-ventilated lodging-house; and the debauchee, bent on prolonging his debauch, shuts out the glorious sunbeams from his house, and carries on his dice, and his wine-cups, and his illicit amours, and his revelry, when it is now high day, and the hedger is at his work, and the market folk are on their way to the town, or busy with their bargains—is any fault, I say, to be found with the sun, because these men, for various reasons, hide themselves away from it, will not come up to it and confront it, banish it as far as in them lies? Is not the light to be accounted "sweet, pleasant,"[2] beautiful, because it disturbs evil-doers, and sends wild beasts to their dens,[3] and makes manifest the flaws and im-

[1] See Job xxiv. 14, 15, 16, 17.

[2] See Eccles. xi. 7.

[3] See Psalm civ. 21, 22.

purities which passed unnoticed in the gloaming?[1] Now "God is light;"[2] and God's revelation of Himself, both in nature by His works and by the moral sense, and in grace by the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the descent of the Holy Spirit, resembles the sunrise; it is a diffusion of light throughout the universe. If men hide themselves from this light, instead of hailing it, will not come up to it, and walk in it, and sun themselves in it, they must perish eternally, not on account of any defect in the light, but purely by their own act and choice. God can do nothing more than manifest to them the beauty of His character—in a word, His wisdom, power, and love. If they have no affinity to that character, and cannot, by reason of their want of affinity to it, unite themselves to God by faith, who is chargeable with their perdition? They themselves alone. It flows, as a natural and necessary consequence, from the perverse exercise of their own free will. It needs not that God should do more than leave them to themselves, with words indicative, not of hostility to them, nor even of indifference to their salvation ("He will have all men

[1] See Eph. v. 13. [2] 1 John i. 5.

to be saved;"[1] "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye"[2]), but of simple acquiescence in the freedom of their will; "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone."[3] He that is "unjust, let him be unjust still," (*ἀδικησάτω ἔτι*, let him still commit injustice); "and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still."[4]

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 4. [2] Ezek. xviii. 32. [3] Hosea iv. 17.

[4] Rev. xxii. 11. This chargeability of human ruin upon man's free will, and not upon God, is strikingly set forth by Irenæus in several passages, two of which I translate, and present to the reader *in extenso*.

Irenæus contra Hæreses, Lib. v. Cap. xxviii. 2, p. 325 [Ed. Massuet, Venetiis, MDCCXXXIV.]:—But as many as in [the exercise of] their deliberate will (*κατὰ τὴν γνώμην αὐτῶν*) fall away from God, upon them He brings that separation from Him which is chosen by themselves. Now, separation from God is death, and separation from light is darkness, and separation from God involves the loss of all the good things which flow from Him. They then who, through their falling away [from God] have forfeited the things aforesaid, inasmuch as they are deprived of all good things, abide in punishment of every kind. Not as if God were the prime and original agent in punishing them, but rather as if their punishment followed in due course on account of their having been deprived of all good things. Now the good things which are from God are eternal and without end; and therefore the privation of them also is eternal and without end (*αἰώνιος καὶ ἀτελεύτητος*); just as, the light being continuous, they who have blinded themselves, or have

So far we have spoken of eternal punishment *generally*, as being in pursuance of a moral law. But, in order to make this branch of our subject complete, it is necessary to observe that the same principle will doubtless apply also to the varieties and gradations of it. To the question how the blessedness of heaven can be said to be perfect to each

been blinded by others, are continuously (διηνεκῶς) deprived of the enjoyment of the light, not because the light brings upon them the punishment [which they undergo] in being blinded, but because the blinding itself superinduces their calamity. And on this account the Lord said: *He that believeth on me is not condemned*, that is, is not separated from God; for by faith he is united to God. *But he that believeth not*, saith He, *is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God*, that is, hath by his own voluntary sentence separated himself from God. *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, etc.*

Lib. iv. Cap. xxxix. 4, p. 286:—But as in [the case of] this temporal light, those who fly from it make themselves over to darkness, so that they themselves become the cause to themselves why they are deprived of light and inhabit darkness, and the light is not the cause to them of this kind of experience, as we before said, so those who fly from the eternal light of God, which containeth in itself all good things, are themselves the cause to themselves of their inhabiting eternal darkness, destitute of all good things.

Irenæus was a very early father, born about 130. In his early youth he had heard Polycarp, who was a disciple of St. John's.

individual, if there are to be degrees in the future recompence of the righteous, it has often been very appositely answered that, just as two vessels may be of unequal capacity, and yet each may be filled to the extent of its capacity, so two hearts may each be made partaker of as much joy and bliss as it is able to receive, and yet one may have a larger receptivity of joy and bliss than the other. And it is a sound practical inference from the doctrine of the relation which acts bear to habits, that every act of virtue and piety, done under the influence of God's grace, expands the capacity of the heart for spiritual joy; makes greater room in it, if I may say so, for the blessedness of heaven. And can we avoid travelling on to the opposite conclusion respecting deliberate acts of sin, done against the motions and attractions of the Spirit of God, and in pursuance of that lower part of our nature, which Scripture calls "the flesh"? Can we forbear from drawing the inference that every such act narrows the soul's capacity for blessedness, and proportionably enlarges its capacity for misery, so that as the saint, by the gradual discipline of God's Providence, Word, and Spirit, has

developed a capacity for spiritual joys; the wicked, on the other hand, by indulgence of his lusts, will have hardened himself in defiance of God, and in aversion to the light, this defiance and aversion being the elements of future restlessness, remorse, and misery, and, in short, constituting a ripeness for hell? How should it make us pause on the brink of a sinful indulgence to think that, even if by God's grace we attain at length to His glory, this action, which we contemplate doing, will in some measure blunt our sensibility to heavenly joys, and thus dash a jewel from our crown; and that, if our lot at last should be with the reprobate, we shall gain by the indulgence an additional qualification for that gnawing of remorse, and that influx of restlessness into the mind, which indeed are a common feature of the condition of the condemned, and yet which may be expected to vary in degree, according to the maturity which each has attained in sin, and in resistance to the Spirit of God!

Such, then, are the quarters in which relief is to be sought from the difficulties, which beset the doc-

trine of Eternal Punishment. That punishment will have its gradations of misery; in administering the judgment which inflicts it, strict regard will be had to the very various degrees of light and knowledge, against which men have sinned; and it will be, when examined in its deepest ground, not so much the infliction of Divine vengeance from without, as the result of the operation of a moral law, left to take its course upon the offender. Doubtless the operation of this moral law might be arrested by tampering with the creature's free will; but this arrest would be tantamount to the constitution of a new creature on another platform, not to the reclamation of the old one. It pleased God, for the fuller manifestation of the beauty and blessedness of His own perfections, to bring into existence rational creatures, capable of loving Him freely, and choosing Him out of love—a step "more worthy of Him," says the great Bishop Butler, "than if He had made every creature a mere reflex of His own will." It followed, as a necessary consequence, that these creatures should be also capable of hating and rejecting Him; and, supposing them to be endowed with immortality,

their hatred and rejection of Him, persisted in during the period allotted to their probation, must insure, in the natural course of things, quite apart from any divine decree, their eternal wretchedness. And surely we may take comfort in the thought, awakened in us by words, which we would fain think that Christ Himself uttered, but which at least were written under the inspiration of His Spirit, that *no soul can be ruined except by this deliberate hatred and rejection of God.* If sinners are to be shut out into the everlasting darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,[1] it can only be because they have "loved darkness rather than light, their deeds being evil."[2]

It must be admitted, I think, by all candid persons, that the above considerations put a very different appearance upon the doctrine of the everlasting punishment of the wicked, from that which it wears, when the awful passages of Holy Scripture which affirm it, are taken by themselves, and isolated from the other parts of Scriptural teaching which bear upon the same subject. And these are reliefs granted by God

[1] See St. Matt. xxii. 13. [2] See St. John iii. 19.

Himself to those meek disciples, who, when parts of His revealed counsel perplex and harass them, patiently seek for a solution in the careful consideration of other parts. How much better and more comfortable are such reliefs, than those which are derived from unauthorised speculations in directions which must be called questionable at best, speculations which tend to explain away some of the Saviour's most stringent warnings, and even to throw doubt upon that "everlasting life," in which we profess our belief, as often as we recite the simplest and earliest Confession of our Christian Faith.[1]

[1] "This *Article*" (respecting the everlasting punishment of the wicked) "was, by the Apostles of Christ, entered into that *depositum* which they left in every Church where they preached; as appears by the last words of the Apostle's Creed, *the life everlasting;* which, as it is expressly contrary to *annihilation*, which is excision and determination of life in respect of duration or lasting, so being subjoined to the *resurrection of the body*, must be indefinitely co-extended to that, and so belong to *all* bodies that are raised. And that it is thus comprehensive, appears more manifestly by the *Athanasian Creed*, which *to the rising and coming again of all men with their bodies, and giving an account for their own works* (which is parallel to the resurrection of the body), subjoins as the explication of everlasting life this express dogma, *And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.* And this was no doubt the

In concluding this series of Sermons, let me for a moment abandon the argumentative line, which, in deference to what has been advanced by eminent men on the other side, I have adopted throughout, and implore all of you, whose confidence in the commonly received doctrine has been shaken by anything you may have read or heard, to pause before you commit to yourself to an opinion of very questionable orthodoxy (to say the least), and of a still more questionable moral tendency. *Of questionable orthodoxy.* Leaving to other and far more competent hands the question whether Everlasting Punishment is *de fide*—that is, a vital and integral part of "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"[1]—it may be said, without fear of contradiction, that the Fathers who lived nearest to the time of the Apostles undoubtedly gathered from their teaching that the

concordant sense of the Churches that had this *depositum* of Christian faith, both from the *Scriptures*, and the preaching of the *Apostles*, and their *successours*, committed to them."—Dr. Henry Hammond, as quoted by the Bishop of Lincoln in *Additional Notes on the Duration of Future Punishments.* "Two Sermons" (Rivingtons, 1878), p. 46.

[1] St. Jude ver. 3.

punishment of the wicked will be of endless duration; that Chrysostom and Augustine, the greatest Doctors respectively of the Eastern and Western Churches, both repudiated the doctrine of the non-eternity of punishment, first broached by Origen in the third century; that, with but few exceptions, the teaching of the Fathers on the subject is that of Chrysostom and Augustine;[1] and that, for the most part, those who in later days have revived the views broached by Origen have manifested (to say the least) a wavering and unsettlement on points of doctrine which *are* unquestionably vital, such as the Atonement, and the Divinity of our Blessed Lord.[2]

[1] I do not mention here the condemnation of the opinions of Origen, at the Fifth General Council in 553, merely because that condemnation has been called in question; and I therefore cannot allege it "without fear of contradiction." But it is generally supposed that Origen's views were there condemned; and Bishop Christopher Wordsworth, no mean authority on such a subject, accepts the usual view.

[2] See this shown in a very able Article of "The Christian Remembrancer" for April 1863 on "Universalism and Eternal Punishment," understood to be by Dr. Cazenove. It might be invidious to quote here the names which he gives, in illustration of this assertion, on page 480. In an earlier part of the Article (p. 457) the writer says:

And also *of questionable moral tendency,* as Origen himself, strange to say, confessed.[1] Have you con-

"Subject to the correction of more profound and laborious students, we avow that, in our own examination of this matter, *we have not been able to discover a single impugner of the dogma of eternal punishment who is consistent in his denial, and at the same time orthodox.*

It is from the above Article (p. 482) that I have borrowed the closing paragraph of this Sermon.

[1] In his "Contra Celsum," vi. 26, p. 293. [Cantabrigiæ, MDCLXXVII.] He has been referring to the words of Malachi (iii. 3) that "the Lord shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver," from which he probably would have extracted the doctrine that, as the process of refining ends in the separation of the metal from the dross, so the discipline of future suffering would in due time purge the impenitent soul of sin; but *he will not express this; he feels it to be dangerous.* He says;

"The things which might be said on this passage are not suitable to be explained to all, nor on the present occasion. Nay, not without danger is it to trust the explicit statement of such things to writing; inasmuch as the majority of men need no further teaching than that of the punishment which shall be inflicted on sinners. For beyond it" [in interpreting such texts] "it is inexpedient to proceed, in consideration of those, *who scarcely through fear of everlasting punishment*" (using the very words of our Lord in St. Matt. xxv. 46, and evidently understanding αἰώνιος to mean *never-ending*), "scarcely restrain themselves from rushing headlong into any excess of vice, and of the sins which flow therefrom."

He evidently thought that the explicit denial of eternal punish-

sidered how, by denying the eternity of future punishment, you are virtually undermining the force of that appeal which our Lord makes to the motive of fear; "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."[1] He, I say, appeals to fear; and therefore, because He does so, fear, though by no means so high in the scale of motives as hope or love, must be a proper motive for us both to appeal to in others, and to be actuated by ourselves. Be not misled by that wretched, mawkish sentimentalism, which, in defiance not only of this appeal, but of all the teachings of a sound moral philosophy, would expunge fear from the category of correct motives, and which so caricatures the doctrine that we must serve God out of love, as to insinuate that, if the thought of self enters into the mind—of the recompence which attends on obedience, or the penalty which attends on disobedience—this thought

ment would remove a barrier against the vices of men which, even as it is, is not stronger than it needs to be, and cannot with any safety be weakened.

[1] St. Matt. x. 28.

spoils the whole service, and renders it unacceptable.[1] Is self-love then (as distinct from selfishness, which is degeneracy), or is it not, a part of the original constitution of our nature? Does God mean us, or not, to be governed by it? What imaginable sense or significance has the exhortation, "Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell," if He does not mean us to be governed by it? What else can simple persons understand by such an appeal,

[1] This sentimentalism shows its head in several popular pieces of devotion. Witness the well-known hymn which contains these stanzas :—

"My God, I love thee, not because
I hope for heaven thereby ;
Nor yet because who love thee not
Must burn eternally.

* * * *

"Then why, O blessed Jesu Christ,
Should I not love thee well ;
Not for the hope of winning heaven,
Nor of escaping hell?" etc. etc.

To love God *only* for the hope of winning heaven, or escaping hell, is of course not the highest form of love, nor that form which, in "the spiritual man," who has attained to see the beauty and excellence of the Divine character, is uppermost. But surely it is the form with which, in the lower stages of the spiritual life, men must begin, and of which, not even in its highest stage, can any rid himself.

but that there is an unspeakably frightful penalty awaiting those who draw down God's displeasure on themselves, of which they will do well, in their own interests, to beware? Oh do not let us, as we value our own souls and those of others, dilute the efficacy of a motive which He, who is Infinite Love, seeks to bring to bear in its full force upon our corrupt hearts. I say, do not let us dilute it; for in truth, as I doubt not many of your consciences will echo, a hell of which we can see an end is no hell. I conclude with an extract from an article in a well-known periodical,[1] written now many years ago, which exactly expresses my design in bringing before you this painful and harassing subject, upon which I have thought that my Ordination vow "to be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word" obliged me to speak :—

"Among the many millions of souls who have departed this life in the faith and fear of Christ, there must be numbers who owe their first serious thoughts, under God, to the agency of a wholesome

[1] The "Christian Remembrancer" for April 1863.

terror of the Divine Judgments. Few, it has been said, and, we believe, with perfect truth—few have fallen into hell who ever thought much about hell. It is the obstinate aversion to that which contravenes our own weak views of sin—it is the determination to explain away the plainest and most emphatic words,—that constitute men's real danger. And if by plain and simple enforcement of Christ's words we should be permitted to rouse any minds to a sense of their peril, and to lead them to seek for salvation through Christ; if thus we should save a soul from death, and, by God's mercy, meet that spirit in the world unseen, what triumph of this earth could bear the most distant comparison with such a victory over sin and Satan?—what gratitude for any kindness here below could be like the gratitude of that soul towards one who had been a partial instrument in winning for it its eternal bliss?"

THE END.

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